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THE  
MONK'S REVENGE:

OR,

THE SECRET ENEMY.

*A Tale of the Later Crusades.*

BY SAMUEL SPRING, ESQ.,

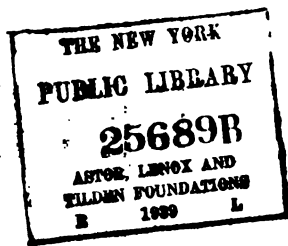
AUTHOR OF "GIAFFAR AL BARMAKI."

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TO

**Mrs. William James Macneven,**

THIS VOLUME

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED,

AS A MARK OF HIS HIGH RESPECT AND ESTEEM,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

19 FEB 1906



# THE MONK'S REVENGE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE MOSLEM.

EVENING was beginning to overshadow the plain, which, broad and waste, shuts in the current of the Dahube, and extends itself on either side to the high and distant mountains that enclose it, when a single horseman spurred his steed along the low and barren banks of the river. The moon, which had scarcely grown from its crescent, was already high in the sky. The transition from day to night, therefore, was almost imperceptible, and to be known only from the first faint shadows cast by surrounding objects as they intercepted the rays of the young planet. There was light sufficient, however, to enable an observer, had there been one upon the heath, to note the dress and appearance of this horseman. He was clad in Turkish robes of taste and richness which became in no ordinary degree his mien and person. A turban of snow white muslin, sparkling with jewels, was placed loftily over features proud in their outline, and singularly calm in their usual expression. His dark eyes were deeply set beneath a high and prominent brow, and his mouth and chin were shaded by a glossy, chestnut-colored beard, which, though it covered, did not conceal their handsome proportions. In person he was tall and well-formed, and it might be easily seen that he had not yet reached the best years of manhood. A richly jewelled cimeter clashed against his thigh as he urged forward a fleet and beautiful Arabian. The young warrior was speeding westwardly, far from the land where his robes were worn, his language spoken,



and his creed held in reverence, for the Turkish arms had not yet made a province of Hungary, and carried war to the gates of the Austrian capital.

Notwithstanding the calmness which, as has been noticed, seemed the habitual characteristic of the horseman's countenance, there were moments as he rode onward when some emotion appeared to disturb him, when some passion, apparently violent, would conquer that steadfastness of feature which it might be, was constitutional with him, but as likely owed its existence to that strict discipline which rendered the Ottomans, particularly in their early history, so stoical and enduring; a discipline which took nothing from their martial energy and impetuosity, but rendered them in action like the whirlwind of their native north, while in rest it left them as listless and languid as the softest air of their lately conquered and adopted country. The moments when he was thus moved might be known by a dark gloom which passed across his features, a wild gesture, a hurried ejaculation, and then he would spur furiously forward, as though, pursued by these motions, he could escape them by a headlong and impetuous career. "Onward, Zeinab, onward!" he cried. "'Tis over a gloomy path, but there is light at the end of the way. Light, aye, by Allah, a consuming fire! Well, onward, onward! As a moth to the taper's flame are the footsteps of thy master."

Thus, at times silent, at times exclaiming to himself, to the night, or to the steed which bore him, he held his course along the bank of the river until he approached a strong fortress or baronial castle which stood upon its margin. As its turrets rose upon his view he proceeded at less speed, as if fearing that the sound of his horse's hoofs might awaken the vigilance of the warder, or disturb the repose of its inmates. He passed and re-passed the castle, gazing intently upon its walls. It might seem as though his purpose were to spy some weakness in the fortress, some point the least carefully defended, upon which it might be assailed at advantage; yet his eyes did not scan the moat, to remark its breadth and depth, the raised drawbridge, the well-guarded gateway; no, they were fastened upon solitary turret, whence, through the barred window, a dim light was streaming as if from a single taper. The Moslem looked upon it for some time in silence, and then exclaimed—

"It is her chamber—let me gaze. Yes, it is her chamber. Youssouf is near it, he says. No one stir within it. Yet she has left the taper burning as if she would soon return. May all good genii keep their watch about her!" He was silent again for a moment, and then continued slowly, yet earnestly, and in a deep, saddened tone: "But I am a dreamer, a vain dreamer; I have fixed my hopes upon that which I cannot obtain, upon a bright star whose sphere is far removed from mine. Yet why should I not dream on when life is thus like night around me! Only in visions can I henceforth know happiness. The air of yon camp hath changed me;

my manhood gives way at times to the weakness of a woman; my faith is faint, my loyalty—but no, by Allah, not to this depth have I fallen. Though free to depart, I have lingered among these Giscars, seeking, as is my wont, to extend my knowledge of mankind; to learn of their customs, whether of peace or war, and perhaps glean somewhat from them which might strengthen and elevate the soul; for though the shell be rough, within is oftentimes sweet fruit. It was an impious thought to expect aught good or ennobling from the enemies of our sacred prophet: such would our wisest Mollahs esteem it. . . . What have I gained from the Infidels? I can bear the weight of their onerous armor; I can wield lance and shield; their language also has become familiar to my tongue. . . . What have I lost? Myself. My heart is enslaved by the bright eyes of a Hungarian maiden—her eyes, said I?—tis her sweet smile, her voice—but no, it is no single charm which holds me thus in thraldom, though each alone were of sufficient power. Were these eyes blind, were this voice lost to me, I could sit forever motionless and listen to hers, or should all senses leave me except sight, I could gaze upon her beauty with a delight that would render me unconscious that I could not listen, could not speak to her. Is it not strange that I should be thus subdued? Yet I had thought it once as strange that the prowess of a single knight should capture me in battle. Body and soul, slave seems written on my forehead. Thou, too, Lailah, whom I once loved so well, I would I had fallen at Istak and left my corpse there, where I have left my honor, so had a brave death covered me from this shame. But the web is spun; fate alone may sunder it. Fate!" he continued, and laughed bitterly at the word; "cannot I do somewhat? Have I no power of myself? Can I not cast aside these fetters? Or am I bound and manacled, a helpless slave, ruled by the iron hand of a relentless destiny? From the silent shore we are tossed unwittingly into the stream of life, the sport of its currents; our very efforts to stem their violence are but the promptings of an instinct which we have neither framed nor chosen. The strong swimmer and the weak, arm, strong and weak not of themselves, and the weakest is often thrown into the wildest whirlpools of the stream. . . . Yet I will do what I may. I will depart, for Ederneh. By Allah and his prophets, I will depart—and leave her? And leave her," after a short pause, was the answer to this self-addressed inquiry. He had scarce spoken the words, however, when his face clouded, and he added in a tone of sorrow, "What to be another's? Perhaps the prize of the brutal Urio, or of some one yet more barbarous than that rude ear! Oh! this I cannot do. What were the world, what life with such a thought forever haunting me? Each moment I should hear in fancy his harsh voice answering to her sweet murmurs, and if in dreams I should place myself near her, I must wake to know that she is his. I will not leave her yet. . . . My rank in the army of the sultan, my wealth, my name, all give me the right to aspire

to her hand. What, though her creed be Christian, has not the august Morad himself wedded a maiden of that faith. I will offer to her all that I possess, and myself—myself to be her slave. Yet what have I that I hold not at my master's will? If he doubt me for my long tarrying in the camp of the Giaour, or if, without mistrust of my loyalty, it should but stir displeasure in his soul, I must wither into nothing before his frown. The danger grows with each moment. Ere this some secret enemy may have breathed suspicion into his bosom, and at a word from his lips, I become as dust—all my well-earned honors blighted; power, wealth and station torn from me, for which I have toiled in council and drenched me in the field. I will return and face them. I shall thus be something, though unhappy—here, I am nothing. Yes, I will depart—to remain is to nourish the ever open wound, whence manhood, life and honor are ebbing. Oh, thou idol of my soul, fairer than those beings whose arms shall welcome me at life's close, farewell! Star of my earthly heaven, rose loveliest in the garden: farewell! your light, your fragrance were not meant for me. Farewell, farewell!"

While the young Ottoman uttered this impassioned adieu, his eyes were fixed upon the turret as if the fair creature whom he thus apostrophized were there in person, instead of those rugged walls listening to his words. He had scarce finished his farewell when he was hurrying onward, still onward toward the setting sun. The perfect steed upon which he rode needed not the spur, but as though he shared in the emotions of his master, coursed along with the speed of the agile, hunted deer. The wind swept meaning across the waste, now rising into a roar almost tempestuous, and drowning the exclamations of the horseman, and again dying into stillness and permitting his hurried tones to echo suddenly and harshly upon his ear. At times his face was almost buried in his bosom, and he seemed neither to direct nor notice the course of his steed, then he would rise erect in his stirrups, and with gleaming eyes urge him faster upon the way. The tumultuous feelings which disturbed him appeared at last, however, to subside, and he gradually resumed his self-control. In this he was aided by the wild speed at which he rode, by the loneliness of the scene and the night around him. "To the camp, Zeinab—to the camp!" he exclaimed, turning the head of his horse which he thus addressed in the opposite direction. "Thou hast borne me as though thou wert rushing upon the lances of the Infidel. Would it were even so!" At this moment a sound fell upon his ear which made him pause. He listened, and borne upon the wind he heard the tramp of feet, proceeding apparently from a considerable body of men, who were approaching from a quarter toward which his own course had been hitherto directed. After a few moments' deliberation, he withdrew from the more beaten road, and retired behind some low thick bushes that grew at a little distance from the margin of the river.

Scarce a cloud was in the sky, and the moon, though in her first week,

poured down her unbroken rays brightly upon the plain. By her clear light, the approaching band might easily and accurately be observed. As it rode slowly forward, it appeared in numbers about fifty knights and esquires, who, with their attendant followers on foot and saddle, armed with cross-bow and battle-axe, might amount to five hundred men. Upon the shoulder of each was a white cross that marked the holy warfare in which they had engaged. The square banner of a knight banneret announced the military rank of their chief, a young man who rode in front, and whose rich harness, the armorial bearings upon his shield, and withal his gay and gallant demeanor, left no doubt but he was noble in his birth. He was armed at all points. His followers also were well equipped, and apparently as perfectly disciplined as the independent warfare of the times would permit. Their horses were evidently jaded and worn, as if by the toil of a long journey.

By the side of the leader of this band rode a tall and stately figure something between knight and churchman. He had passed the middle years of life, yet from the quick, keen glance of his eye, from the freedom of each action, amounting almost to youthful activity, and from the brown looks as yet unsilvered, which escaped from beneath his cap, it might seem that the hand of time had touched him lightly. His features were stern, and strongly marked, the breadth and fulness of his high forehead, the sharply delineated lines about his compressed lips denoting ability, with firmness and courage. They were handsome also, being regular and lofty. Yet his was not a countenance such as the eye loves to dwell upon. It is the soul shining out through the face which attracts the glance or repels it, for it gives to its easily moulded forms an expression that outlasts each newly springing emotion, and becomes their habitual characteristic. This, with the tones of the voice, and that negligence of feature which accompanies free and familiar speech, will give to the practised eye an insight into the heart which an intimacy of years will most commonly confirm. There was a trace of indulged passion, of recklessness, in truth, combined with coldness and craft, upon the face of this man, which gave to every look and motion, even the most courtly and fair seeming, the stamp of unscrupulous selfishness. His figure, though tall, was closely knit, and sufficiently muscular to give to its possessor the appearance of considerable strength. A richly embossed helmet with its tippet of mail hung at his saddle bow, and in its place he wore a cap of scarlet velvet, faced with minever. His upper garment was a surcoat or sabard trimmed with the same beautiful fur, made without sleeves, and extending a little below the hips of the wearer. Beneath this he had a shirt of proof mail, formed of steel rings curiously interlaced, and woven so flexibly as to adapt itself without inconvenience to every motion of his body. The front part of his thighs, as they were visible from beneath his furred sabard, were protected by the cuisse or thigh-piece which united at the knee with the steel stocking that

laced upward from the ankle. His offensive weapons consisted of a straight, Italian sword fastened at his left side by a girdle of polished leather, and a small dagger, the handle of which protruded from the same cincture at his right.

Two priests who rode next were not unworthy of remark. The one was a Benedictine monk, whose round and corpulent frame told of any thing rather than of fasts and penances. His limbs were short, the lower ones reaching scarcely to mid-girth, but so much the more ample were they in circumference. The arm which held the bridle rested upon a huge rotundity of belly, which in its turn, swayed to and fro upon the fore part of the saddle. Towards this portion of his person the good father extended his constant care, guarding it with his left hand and sometimes even with his right against every concussion, and as often as this proved unavailing, testifying his sympathy in its disquiet, by a deep and sudden ejaculation. His face was a goodly counterpart to his body. It was broad and full, but the separate parts thereof were not clearly marked; they were blended together, and almost lost in the smooth surface whereupon in most men they are distinctly imprinted. It was, in short, like the moon when at its full; the features of a human countenance seem limned upon its disk, but to distinguish and define them accurately would prove no easy task. The expression which was visible therein—but it could not be said, in truth, that aught which deserved this name was to be found in his smooth and vacant countenance. What nearest approached thereto was a look of great mystery, an air of profound and striving thought, when aught was spoken of by those around that seemed abstruse and strange to him, which happened indeed, not unfrequently. He would then drop his loose brows over his eyes until the latter were no longer visible, project his under lip, move his head to and fro with a wise air, and perhaps mutter short sentences or single words which appeared to have much meaning for him. The only variety to this play of his features was a series of expanding smiles that wandered over his face, and which sometimes went as far as open laughter, if by chance a jest was in hand, or when he had once persuaded himself that this was the case, for it was not always that he judged rightly on this point. He was one, most like, who had been a daily listener to the gay and witty discourse of his superiors, and had laughed faithfully at all that he heard, until he had lost the power to discern when his merriment was accurately in place. Not greatly different was it with the mysteriousness of his demeanor. He had witnessed, doubtless, his share of wonders on his way through life, had been the depository of many strange secrets, but he had pondered so often upon them, had guarded them so carefully, that he looked upon most that was said to him in this light, unless, indeed, he decided that it was plainly and undeniably a jest. By those who judge at first sight, he would be taken alternately for a sage and a man of much humor and mirthfulness, but it needed only a second glance to dispel this illusion. He might be compared most aptly to a flask once filled unwitting

tingly with red wine, from which it has as unwittingly been poured; the stain, the dregs, may be seen upon its surface, but he views it not with shrewd eyes who thinks to find therein a remnant of its former rich contents.

It would be a correct description of his companion to say that he was the reverse of all this. But he must not be passed by so carelessly. He was clad in the habit of the order of St. Francis. His form was tall and gaunt, and he governed his steed with the skill of a practised rider rather than like the humble monk which he seemed. The features left uncovered by his cowl were pale as marble, and worn even to emaciation. A light—yes, a fire, gleamed from his dark, deep sunken eyes, which each one in that train avoided. This, however, shone out only at intervals; a strange, fearful smile would then pass across his face, and he would grasp with a convulsive movement the heavy mace which rested before him upon the saddle, as though he meditated a sudden assault upon an enemy. At ordinary times he was cold, impassive and destitute as a statue of every expression of emotion. When he spoke, it was but a few words, and with a low smothered voice. Such was the appearance and demeanor of this strange man, and they afforded to his companion not a little food for thought and profound meditation; for that there was mystery here; this saw the good monk full clearly.

After these followed knights, esquires, pages and men at arms, a long train, the description of which is unnecessary, and would afford but little interest to the reader. What in addition has any present bearing upon this narration shall be told in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE MARCH.

THE path which these warriors had pursued during the last few days lay across the most dreary and uncultivated portion of eastern Hungary. Neither thus far had the scene around them improved as they proceeded toward or along the Danube. But little vegetation showed its growth of green to gladden them, unless in the low bushes which stood at rare intervals upon the

heath, or where the foot of steed uncovered some tufts of stunted herbage. Even the few spots of meadow land which they crossed were intersected by swamp and morass, and seemed to arise indeed out of saltish or alkaline pools, and upon the grass blades lay a white saline deposit, which gave to them, instead of the freshness of youth, the appearance of hoary declining age. Nothing was there in truth on the face of the surrounding country to cheer the journey of the travellers, except the vast river which flowed upon their left. About sunset they found themselves still at some distance from the city of Buda, the place of their destination; yet, unwilling to pass the night upon the plain, they pressed forward, although, for the most part, in no very agreeable mood. Their young leader, in particular, could not conceal his dissatisfaction, and vented it by railing against the land through which they journeyed.

"It is, methinks," he said, speaking in Italian, "it is a habitation for no good Christian, but fit for these same Infidel dogs whom we are come to expel from it. What sayst thou, my lord cardinal? Art thou not of my mind in this?"

"I will confess to thee, my son," replied the stately churchman at his side, "the land offers as yet no good promise. Yet should we bear in mind that the ravages of war have often swept across its plains. Scarce has the peasant leisure to hold the plough; even then his hand must at the same time grasp sword or spear. How is it, father?" he continued, turning to the tall, pale monk who rode behind him. "Thou hast before travelled this path, and thus far hast guided us well. Are there no green fields, no hills and vallies with their vineyards beyond us, or is all Hungary as waste and desolate as this?"

A singular smile stole over the features of the man whom he thus addressed, as he replied, "I have seen here vallies and woods which might rival those of thine own Italy. I find them no longer. Misfortune has fallen sharply upon many children of Hungary."

"Yet thou art not a native of this land?"

The old man shook his head in the negative, but did not answer. "It is in part the desolation of war which we see around us," resumed the ecclesiastic. "But be the country what it may, it is within the pale of the holy church, it is the home of our brethren."

"As yet I have seen none such," rejoined the young knight. "Rude men have we met with furred caps and leathern jerkins, but not one, by my faith, whom I might call brother."

"But ye have heard of such; ye have heard of the White knight, John Huniades, whose renown in war has spread throughout Europe, of Ulric of Cillia, of their young and gallant monarch Ladislaus? These are warriors whom it need not shame even thee, Sir Marquis, to term brothers in arms." There was a shade of sarcasm infused into his tone, of which the speaker was per-

haps unconscious. It did not help to soothe the querulous humour of his companion.

"Aye, I have heard of them," he replied. "And I now wonder yet the more that knights of such fame should desire foreign aid against their barbarous foemen. They must send throughout Christendom; Italy, France, England even, must despatch their succors, as if forsooth their best lances had no good employment of their own, but must cross Europe to find an enemy. By my lady's love, were it not for the good will I have to wield sword against these Moslems, I would leave the protection of this fruitful land to the strong arms of these same good knights thou dost laud so highly."

"Peace, Di Rimini! Utter not thine impieties in my hearing. Thou hast placed the cross upon thy breast and wilt peril the honor of thy name, if thou hast no thought upon thy soul's welfare shouldst thou turn back."

"Nay, I spoke not of return," replied the young chief, moved by the earnestness with which he was addressed. "I did but utter my mind as to the prowess of warriors who call themselves Christian knights, and yet suffer the banner of the cross to be lowered before the infidel. I spoke not of return. Here am I, Pandolfo di Rimini, with my men at arms, vassals and retainers, ready to do battle against these dogs, were the odds three fold and Amurath himself at their head. As for their land, holy father, I will confess it fruitful as the land of promise to the Hebrews—could it be spied out—to its knights I will yield the palm of valor; and its dames—these thou wilt doubtless say are paragons of beauty." The cardinal did not reply. A cloud was upon his brow, although he had smiled at the first gay words of his companion. He averted his face, and seemed busied with viewing the river as it swept onward in the moonlight. The knight turned then to the tall monk who rode behind them, and was about to repeat his question, but the words were stifled in their birth as he glanced upon that gaunt figure, that death-like, palid countenance. The same strange, unearthly smile played upon his lips, and his hollow, piercing eyes were fixed upon the cardinal, while his left hand griped hard upon the handle of his mace. "So ho! Corpo di Dio," exclaimed the Italian, "what fiend's face is that thou wearest? Arouse thee, thou art in a dream!" The look passed like lightning from the features of the monk; retiring within himself, he muttered incoherent excuses, and was silent.

"There, now thou art awake, thou canst answer me," continued Di Rimini. "I would know whether there be bright eyes and fair forms here in Hungary, so that if a knight should by good hap do a brave deed of arms, he may be rewarded in that kind which he values above all others—smiles, sweet words and it may be more, more—how sayst thou, father? I tell thee I shall never battle gaily if it be not so; my steed will not bear me so boldly, my very lance, by heaven, would become weak and pointless if its ringing shock is not to echo in the ears of beauty."



"Cease thy folly, Sir Pandolfo," cried the cardinal, "now in this still night it sounds harshly. Thou hast left loves enough behind thee, I doubt not, and mightest willingly miss them here."

"Dost thou think I had parted so easily with them, holy father, had I not looked to have their loss supplied?"

"Gay knight, enjoy it while thou mayst. There will yet come storm upon thee which will sweep away this lightness. But shouldst thou find neither in the land, nor in its warriors, nor in its dames, enough to hold thee here, let thy faith take place of these. Let thy knightly honor, aye, thy interest, keep thee to thy purpose. Were this Hungary a wilderness, uninhabited save by wild beasts, still should no foot of Turk pollute its plains. It is the barrier of Christendom. The time was when the sea was its boundary and the Grecian Empire its bulwark; now the infidels have planted their accursed crescent upon the soil of Europe. Let them pass no farther, or what shall protect Germany, Italy, aye, thine own fair possessions, Sir Marquis?" The speaker read his answer in the scornful smile of Di Rimini, as his femininely blue eye glanced backward upon his train. "Thou hast brave followers, in truth," continued the churchman, "and many barons and feudal lords, thou wilt say, can raise a force as well appointed as thine own. But the Ottoman is no woman that he should tremble at the shaking of thy lances."

"Heaven's grace, my lord cardinal!" exclaimed the young knight impatiently, "wilt thou liken yonder light armed dogs to the iron warriors who ride behind us? I grant the speed of their horses, an advantage, by St. Peter, which they may learn to prize, but when was vest or turban a defence against steel spear and axe!"

"At Nicopolis," was the reply, "where a gallant and numerous army of Christians were routed by the fiery Bajazet, and the flower of the French and Burgundian chivalry fell into the power of that haughty conqueror."

"I have heard of it; I have heard of that disastrous field," rejoined Di Rimini. "The caprice of accident, or the will of heaven, so decreed that the victory should remain for once with the infidel. But this moves me not, save with the desire to revenge the good blood which flowed on that day, and I would to heaven that at this hour we stood opposed to those dogs, aye, were it ten to one, to wipe out the stain upon our arms."

"Thus thought the Emperor Sigismund," said the cardinal, "thus thought John of Burgundy, the Sire de Coucy, and a host of other names, the most renowned in Christendom, when at sight of their gallant and well appointed force they cried, 'Let the heavens fall, we will uphold it with our lances.' But their confidence did not save them from defeat, and the stern Sultan repaid their presumption with equal scorn. Listen to the words of Bajazet, as he dismissed the heir of Burgundy and his comrades, after the most costly productions of Europe had been paid for their ransom. 'Count de Nevers,'

said the conqueror, "I know that in thine own country thou art a noble, and the son of a great lord. Thou art young, and at some future time, perhaps, wilt desire to efface the shame and disgrace of thy first essay in chivalry. Thou wilt gladly assemble thy forces to seek and give me battle. Did I fear thy power, I should make thee and thy companions swear, by thy religion, never to take up arms against me. But neither from thee nor from them will I exact such a promise. For myself, I am willing that when thou art returned to thine own land, thou shouldst collect thy powers and come against me. Thou wilt find me always ready and prepared to meet thee and thy people."

"God curse the pagan hound for his pride and arrogance!" exclaimed the young knight, striking his armed hand heavily against his breast. "But he met with his reward. Men say that he was caged like a wild beast!"

"I know not if the tale be true," replied the churchman. "But this is certain, it was not from christian hands that he received his punishment. It was reserved for one as wild and barbarous as himself to subdue and humble his haughty soul. Thou seest, then, sir knight," continued the cardinal, after a short pause, "that thou shouldst not value too lightly the prowess of this enemy."

"Now hast thou, good father, altogether overlooked one strong vantage which we hold over these infidels," said the knight, smiling. "I mean the blessing of heaven and the prayers of the holy church."

"True—thou hast rightly reproved me, my son," was the reply. "From heaven cometh the strength and the victory."

By this time the band had reached the spot where, anticipating its march, we have already introduced it to the notice of the reader. The chiefs here halted and held a short consultation as to their course, whether they should still press forward in search of shelter, or content themselves with such as a slight tent could afford them, until the morning should enable them to pursue their journey. On a sudden they were startled by the neighing of a steed close at hand, and in a moment the Moslem rode forth from his concealment. His lofty and noble figure, his well suiting turban and robes, the beauty of his steed and the singular skill with which he governed him,—above all, his appearance at that place and hour, struck every one with astonishment. It seemed indeed as if the Infidel had arisen out of the earth to vindicate his nation from the scorn which had been cast upon it by the Italian. Ere they had well recovered from their surprise, the horseman approached and accosted them in the Hungarian language. "What seek ye, knights and gentlemen?" he said, framing his speech after that courteous sort which he knew to be the custom of those whom he addressed. "Is the path ye travel unknown to you? If this be so, I can guide you perchance to the place you seek."

"It is even so," replied the ecclesiastic. "We are but newly come into this land. How far hence lies Buda?"

"It is five leagues thither, my lord," answered the Moslem.

"It is far, and already have we ridden hard to-day," said the other. "Dwells there near no good Christian, be he knight or esquire, to whom we may be bounden for a night's shelter?"

"There is, not far from this spot, the dwelling of a noble baron—shall I lead them thither," he added, interrupting himself,—“wolves to the fold of the lamb?"

"Why dost thou hesitate? Thou canst not doubt we should meet with a gentle reception?"

"Scarcely could ye fail of a courteous welcome from the old Baron Von Arnheim. Such as these may see her, may stand in her presence—but I—"

"In heaven's name then, Sir Moslem, lead us thither. This is no time for delay," exclaimed the cardinal, impatiently.

The tone of the priest's voice grated harshly upon the bosom of the Ottoman, filled as it was with a sleeping storm of passion. He drew himself up more proudly in his saddle, while the jewels in his turban sparkled in the moonlight with the motion, and replied: "Is it the custom, Sir Priest, for those of thy country and faith to seek favor from one like me? Ye count too quickly upon my guidance."

"In God's name, Sir Turk, thy churlishness shall not pass," exclaimed Di Rimini, in his native Italian, when his companion had explained to him the words of the infidel. Thou shalt perforce guide us thither, or suffer for thy presumption. "Saying this, he placed lance in rest, lowered the vizor of his helmet, and was in the act of urging his horse against the Moslem. Though his language was unintelligible to the latter, yet his purpose could not be misunderstood. Drawing upon his bridle, the Ottoman wheeled his steed half across the road, and then held him motionless for a moment as he pressed him with the spur. So accurately did the docile animal obey his wishes, that from a state of sudden action, as he turned, he stopped upon the instant as if transformed to stone. He stood as it were in a state doubtful whether of rest or motion; so bold, so impending was his attitude, it seemed as if the next moment he must dart like lightning upon his course, and still the will of his rider held him as though he were rooted to the ground, which his limbs appeared scarcely to touch.

The cardinal perceived the intent of his companion, and grasping his bridle firmly, exclaimed, "It is idle, sir knight. Speak the knave fair, if ye would not sleep this night upon the heath. Think ye with this jaded steed to overtake yon fleet Arabian? Mark how he stands like one of our own statues. Observe him well, Di Rimini; such is the foe thou hast been taught to despise. Hold!" he continued, addressing the Moslem. "Forget not courtesy, if it be a quality of which ye know aught—or at least that good will

which should find place between warriors, although enemies. Upon your own deserts, if I have heard aright, ye would not refuse the shelter of a tent, even to a foeman. Neither will we ask favor from thee without meet reward. If thou wilt guide us to the castle thou hast named, thy guerdon shall be this chain of gold." So saying, he unfastened a costly chain which he wore about his neck, and held it toward the Moslem.

"Courtesy !" exclaimed the latter in a tone of scorn. "It is a word often on the lips of the Christian, and I think not ye are niggard of it toward each other. But ye best know what courtesy one of my race would meet with at your hands, unless cimeter or jerrid could compel it. Yet I will guide you thither," he continued, after a short pause, "though not for the chain ye proffer, but that it suits my pleasure. Let there be peace between us."

"There is peace," said the cardinal, and the Infidel approached, and having joined the band, continued his course with it along the river, riding in front with the prelate and Di Rimini."

"What a barbarous jargon doth yonder accursed dog discourse in," said the corpulent monk to his companion, as they proceeded on their way.

"Barbarous, sayst thou?" was the sole reply of the other, who had listened to the foregoing conversation with an interest which had lighted up his pale face, and had given to it an expression somewhat more human than it was wont to wear.

"Truly, it doth seem to me most barbarous."

"It is like almost forgotten music to my ear," rejoined the former. "It is the Hungarian."

"The Hungarian! I can readily believe it," said father Antonio. "It sounds to me like the clatter of our convent mill. So is it in truth with each language I do not comprehend, be it German, French, or what other thou wilt. I have often reflected, brother, that to take delight in any speech, it should be understood, in part at least, though why this should be is not clear—I confess I cannot explain how it is. The intent and use of language," he continued, seeing that the other did not reply, "at least of our own, if I am right, is to disclose and declare our purposes one to another, but with all foreign, strange tongues I think it is quite the reverse of this. They are meant to cloak and conceal our thoughts, as at present now, his most Holy Eminence can hold converse with yonder Turk, speak of many things, give question and answer, while thou, I myself and the rest, let us listen and look ever so wisely, can understand no word of the matter. See'st thou not? ha! dost thou not perceive?"

"It is doubtless as thou sayst," replied the other, scarce heeding his words.

"Oh, it must be so," proceeded the good father warmly. "We may learn as much from scripture if we look accurately—accurately, I say.

View once the confusion of mankind, and the dispersion of their tongues at Babel. Here set themselves the wicked of the earth to build a tower unto Heaven, which certainly must be hindered, for if they once had come so far, who can tell what the end might have been. And I see not but they might have compassed it, so long as they could hold council and deliberation, and maintain a good understanding one with another. Then the Almighty falls upon this device, namely, to mingle and confound their tongues—how marvellous! and simple likewise, when once discovered. Hereupon arises a mere confusion and hubbub; one speaks straightway the Latin, one the Greek, a third French, and so on with the Italian, German, Castilian, Provençal, and I doubt not this same Hungarian was of the number; each one conceals his own purposes, as I may say, from his neighbor; there is no more any order, any concert, and the building stops—stops, see'st thou, and forsooth, not because the hands of the workmen are lamed, palsied, or withered in any manner, but simply that their tongues are moved in this wonderful wise. Ah, I lose myself in admiration!" Antonio paused, listened awhile to the unintelligible discourse of those who preceded him, then shook his head and exclaimed, "Never tell me, brother, that thou dost take delight in that jargon. My ears declare to me plainly that it is a barbarous dialect, and I assert it and repeat it. It is barbarous. In truth, there is only our Italian and the noble Latin in particular, that can be called a well sounding pleasing tongue. What now can be more harmonious than the "*Gloria in Excelsis* or *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*?"

Or "*Ne Domine in furore*!" said his companion, somewhat impatiently.

"That I cannot so quickly assent to," rejoined Antonio. "Never do I hear that psalm without thinking of the fasts and penance I have endured. And this brings me to another reflection. Does not the recollection of things fasten to the words themselves, and render them pleasing or unpleasing to the ear, when so far as mere harmony is concerned they may be all equally well sounding? What thinkest thou?"

"It is in truth so," replied the other with a deep sigh, and turning from his companion he gave his attention to the conversation between the Cardinal and his strange guide. With him we also will leave the deep speculations of Antonio, and listen to their discourse. "Our path lies onward before us," said the Moslem in answer to an inquiry of the ecclesiastic. "A ride of a league will bring us to the castle of Von Arnheim."

"Knowest thou well the place of which thou dost speak? and the road thither?" asked the cardinal.

"The eagle cannot find its eyrie at night with a surer wing, though its young are there awaiting it."

"Yet if thy garb do thee no wrong, thou art far from thy home," rejoined the priest.

"It is in the camp of the sultan," was the reply.

"And thine errand here?"

"Is accomplished, is—nothing."

"By Heaven, it is strange," exclaimed the cardinal.

"Why shouldst thou deem it strange?" replied the Ottoman. "Thou thyself art treading a path new and unknown to thee—thou likewise art far from thine own land, and who can tell but thou art come upon an errand as useless and idle as mine own."

"Ha! thinkest thou so?" cried the ecclesiastic. "I know not what may be thy purpose here in Hungary, nor how far success has waited on it, but for mine own and that of these noble gentlemen who ride with me, it is not idle, though one that will sound harshly in thine ears."

"Wilt thou declare it to me?"

"With a right good will, so thou wilt listen patiently. It is to drive such as thou from this land, to cleanse Europe from thy accursed sect, aye, and perhaps, perhaps"—The speaker did not conclude his sentence; his ardent, sanguine and energetic mind passed even into Asia, and contemplated the rescue of the Holy Land from the grasp of the Infidel.

The brow of the Moslem flushed for an instant, but he had been well schooled to bear these terms of scorn. He repressed the answer which rose to his lips, and replied coldly: "It is even as I have said. Thy coming is idle, and will in no wise aid the object thou dost esteem thus holy."

"Thy speech, Infidel, savors of presumption!" exclaimed the cardinal haughtily. "Cast thine eyes backward over this gallant array—over these strong and iron forms."

"I have scanned them all," interrupted the Ottoman, "knights, esquires and men at arms—all, even to the pages who bear the armor which seems too weighty for their masters."

"Dost thou deem so lightly of their aid, then? Are they not fitting instruments for the good work I spake of?"

"They are good warriors, I doubt not," said the Moslem, "but be they the bravest, Sir Priest, that ever mounted steed, it matters not, it is equal whether they go forward, or here on this spot draw bridle and return whence they came. There is peace between the Giaours and the children of our august Sultan."

"Peace!" cried the cardinal, in wonder. "Hearest thou, Di Rimini," he continued, turning to that knight, and speaking in his own language, "there is peace with the Infidel." The word ran like lightning through the band, but sooner than this, it was echoed by the tall, pale priest, though in a voice which reached only the ear of him who rode at his side. He smiled again, raised the weapon which he carried, and shook it with a glance of bitter, fiend-like pleasure. Father Antonio started. "Dost thou see a wolf hereabouts, brother, or has Satan possession of thee, or dost thou dream? Peace, sayst thou, and with that look and gesture. Here is a confition and

a mystery! I like it not—let there be a little space between us.” Saying this, he drew off some paces, muttering—“A man, wild and dangerous, or troubled somewhat by the adversary,” and so continued his way, keeping a careful watch upon each movement of his mysterious companion.

“Thy tidings, Infidel, are hard for me to credit,” rejoined the ecclesiastic.

“Still thou wilt find them true,” was the reply. “A truce for ten years has been concluded between the two powers, and Morad has withdrawn his forces into Asia.”

“When was this? where?” inquired the other quickly.

“At the Diet of Segedin, on the 4th of the month Saphar, which ye call St. Barnabas day.”

“It cannot be,” cried the young knight, when the cardinal had interpreted these words. “Have we not heard of advantage gained by the Hungarian. It is a fiction of the knave’s. It may be he would escape us.”

“I cannot think, Moslem, resumed the prelate, “that with the fortune of war on their side, the Hungarians would make any terms which should leave one of thy nation on this side the Euxine. Have they not beaten the Ottoman at Sofia and Istatu?”

“For an instant the breeze of victory breathed upon the banners of the Christian. But the Sultan was not with his children in the battle.”

“Yet they were led by the Bey of Roumelia, their most skilful leader, and he himself, if we have heard aright, was left a prisoner in the hands of the Hungarians.”

“Thus far, thou hast rightly heard, that he was a captive,” replied the Ottoman. “But he is one of the humblest of the servants of our august Sultan.”

“Report calls him the bravest.”

“Him the bravest! Have ye not heard of the fierce Mahomet whose sword is like the lightning; of the bold and skilful Vizier Khalil, and whose ears do not tingle at the name of Morad, as when the name of the master of fate is sounded? Michal Ali is not worthy to kiss the dust beneath his feet.”

“It is he! It is the Bey, I doubt not,” said the cardinal. “See that he escape not from our hands. Send forward two men at arms, but warily, that the knave remark it not.” Beckoning a knight who rode up, Di Rimini gave the necessary order, and two men at arms, with their followers, advanced in front of the band, and preceded it during the remainder of the way. This did not escape the eye of the young Moslem; he gave no signs, however, that he observed it, except that it seemed to render him more silent than heretofore. He became less communicative, and replied to every question of the cardinal with brevity and evident circumspection. Their path led them by this time over spots of well cultivated land, covered with the stubble of corn, or the after-growth of the mown meadow. Groups of tall trees appeared here and there, throwing their shadow across the road; these became

more frequent as they advanced, until they gathered together in a well wooded forest. On emerging from this into an open space, our travellers beheld the turrets of the castle which they sought, towering high above them.

After some parley with the warden, the drawbridge was lowered, and the portcullis raised to admit them. As the cardinal was about to cross, he heard the starting of a steed. He turned to grasp the bridle of the Ottoman, but it was beyond his reach. Di Rimini, however, had seized the caftan of the horseman, thinking to dislodge him from his seat. But that of the Moslem proved surer than his own. Half dragged from the saddle, the young knight loosed his hold, and the infidel spurred onward without impediment.

"Stay, dog!" exclaimed Di Rimini with an angry voice. "Draw thy steel and abide me for a moment."

The Moslem clutched his cimeter, as if he would prepare himself for the encounter, but without drawing it. "Such is the courtesy of the Giaour!" he cried. He had no time to add more, for the Italian, lance in rest, was in full career toward him. He awaited him as if he were without the power to move from his assault, and the point of the young knight's spear seemed to threaten him with instant overthrow. When it was within a few feet of his breast, he touched his horse with the spur, avoided the shock by a sudden bound across the path, then wheeling round him like lightning, he gained the side of his antagonist before he could recover from his headlong career. Drawing his cimeter from its sheath, he passed it lightly above the helmet of the Italian, severing the plume which ornamented it. He caught the feather ere it fell to the ground, and exclaimed—"It is but a light guerdon for my guidance; thou mayst demand it of me hereafter—at the sword's point if thou wilt." He then gave the rein to his steed, and in a moment was dashing across the plain with a speed which laughed to scorn all attempt at pursuit. Vexed at his ill success, moody and sullen, Pandolfo returned to his train; concealing his mortification as he was best able, he crossed the drawbridge with the rest, and rode into the court of the friendly castle.



## CHAPTER III.

## CASTLE ARNHEIM.

LEAVING their attendants and men at arms in the court-yard, the leaders of the band were ushered by a menial beneath a low, massive portal, into a vaulted passage, then up a narrow, spiral stair-way of stone, which brought them to the entrance of the Great Hall, into which the new comers were at once admitted. At the upper end of the apartment sat a man well advanced in years. His hair, which was long and white, was worn away about the temples, yet not so much, it might seem, from age or bodily decay, as from the constant chafing of his steel helmet. His thin, iron visage was pale and furrowed, and marked with many a scar, but a sparkling light-gray eye redeemed it from every expression of sternness. He rose to receive the strangers with apparent difficulty or pain. By this act he displayed a frame somewhat spare and emaciated, yet one of that sinewy structure with which strength and endurance are by no means incompatible. His whole appearance in truth, marked him out as no carpet knight, no baron of the chamber but one whose foot had been often in the stirrup, and whose muscles had been well strung by manly and warlike exercise. His manner as he welcomed the new guests and assigned to them their several places, was frank and unconstrained, but exhibited the skill of a practised host, and was tinged at the same time with such nobleness of demeanor as left no doubt in the minds of the strangers that they stood in the presence of the master of the castle. A young and beautiful maiden who was seated beside the old baron, rose with him, startled from the fond and childlike posture which she had chosen upon a low stool at his feet. She was in the bloom of youth; somewhat above the middle height, and rather of full than slender and delicate proportions. In neither respect, however, did her form pass those limits within which true symmetry is to be found. Her eyes were of a clear, varying blue, and the color of her hair was singularly suitable to them. It was of a bright chesnut, and was arranged with extreme care, yet at the same time, simply and without art. Upon her forehead it was parted, enveloping each temple with a glossy fold, and then passed behind the ears, from beneath which it curled forward, touching her cheek and neck. Behind, it was wound dexterously upon itself and fastened by a clasp or ornament of silver. The expression of her face was gay and careless, and still a trace of spirit and decision was not absent, which was due for the most part to her lips and chin, features which more than any others gave her a resemblance to the old man at whose

side she stood, and marked with sufficient clearness the relation which existed between them. After the first surprise had passed, she received the strangers with dignity and ease.

"Ye are welcome, holy priests and good knights, right welcome," said the baron. "My wounds newly healed must pass as excuse with you that I met you not in the court."

"Speak not of excuse, worthy baron, nor of idle ceremony," said the stately churchman, returning the welcome of the old man with equal courtesy and nobleness. "If thy hospitality will so far extend itself as to grant us a simple shelter for the night, we shall be much bounden to thee."

"By St. Stephen, ye are warmly welcome," replied the baron. "Hark ye, knaves," he continued, turning and addressing some half dozen menials who were loitering near the door of the hall, and staring with open eyes at the new guests, "a truce with your gaping and whispering, and bestir yourselves. Saw ye never a knight nor a holy father of the church before? My noble guests must needs think they have come among heathen. Let the board be spread! venison, beef, mutton, whatever be in the larder—a good store of each—and see, ye varlets, that ye spare not the cellar! How sayst thou, holy father?" he added, turning to the prelate, "a cup of passable wine will not come amiss, methinks, after your journey."

"We will taste it with a right good will, so thou wilt play the host's part," replied the cardinal.

"But in show, in mere show," rejoined Von Arnheim. "I am forbidden it by the leech. Since these wounds have been upon me, a drop of wine is like fire in my veins, yet the mere savour thereof, methinks, cannot harm. But how was it that ye chanced to light upon my poor castle?"

"Fortune brought us a guide, worthy baron, and by my faith a strange one."

"What manner of man was he?" inquired the old man.

"A Moslem horseman," replied the other, "young, of noble mien, and richly apparelled. Scarce thought I any dog of them all bore such a presence."

"'Tis Ali Pacha, 'tis thy prisoner," said the baron, addressing a young man in armor who sat retired within the recess of a window, and who, after a passing glance at the strangers, seemed more occupied in gazing at Bertha, the daughter of the old man, than in scanning the new guests or listening to their discourse. The young knight did not answer, and the baron continued: "Yet what could be his errand on the plain at this hour? Why did he not enter with you?"

"In good sooth, the fault was not ours," replied the cardinal. "We labored hard to prevail with him. How was it, Di Rimini? Thou hadst the chief share in the well meant controversy with the Infidel—relate, and I will interpret to our noble host."

The brow of the young Italian reddened. "'Tis a foolish matter," he said, "not worth the recounting. The dog owed his safety to the goodness of his horse—this, I think, none who saw it can doubt, otherwise he were now a prisoner in this castle, or had felt the point of my lance."

"I see, I understand it, though little versed in thy tongue," said the baron, addressing the cardinal in the Hungarian. "Yet it had been ill done, methinks, to return, in this wise, his service—if such it were in truth, to guide you to this poor dwelling. But ye knew him not, nor his conditions. It was the leader of the Turkish host."

"Speakest thou in sober earnest, Sir Baron?" said the cardinal, assuming a high, proud tone, "or dost thou mock us, strangers in thy land, with idle tales? The leader of the Turkish host! and free to come and go at will through the Christian camp!"

"Mock, sayst thou? It is a somewhat discourteous charge—yet the mystery which perplexes thee is easily explained."

"Ha!" exclaimed the prelate, "thou dost mean this truce, which yon Turk spoke of. Is the tale true? Can it be that Christendom is thus false to itself? Thy looks confirm it. Well, speak out."

"These are high words, holy father," interrupted the baron, endeavoring to check the anger which he felt rising in his bosom. "Yet thou art our guest, and for this it shall pass. Yon Turk spoke truth. There is a ten years' truce between the Christians and the Infidels."

"And upon what terms? with what treasure or what promise has Amurath bought the honor of thy country?"

"The honor of Hungary is neither bought nor sold, Sir Priest. We have gained advantage over the Infidel at the sword's point, and have not lacked the wit to reap due benefit therefrom. The dungeons of Adrianople are to be thrown open and the prisoners set at liberty. Servia is to be restored to its ruler, the despot George, and the Danube is henceforth to be the boundary between the two kingdoms."

"Where is the blood of those who fell at Widdin and Semendria? It is scarce yet dry upon the earth, and are they so soon forgotten?"

"Peace be with them," said Von Arnheim, "they died the death of brave men, and they have been well avenged. Sofia and Istatu are names written with blood in Turkish history. But be it as it may, I well know the truce was not made for thy pleasure."

"Yet, durst they do it?" exclaimed the cardinal; "durst they condemn thus the holy church? The legate of the Pope daily, nay hourly, expected, and to blight the hopes of Christendom when at the fairest, by this damning peace! How know'st thou this? Thou wast not present at the Diet. Thou hast been ill with thy wounds. Hast thou sure knowledge of this compact, or is it but the common bruit of rumor?"

"Yon knight was present when the truce was signed," answered the ba-

ron, pointing to him whom we have before mentionec. The eyes of all present were turned towards the latter as he rose from his retired seat, and stepped forward to reply. In age he might be approaching his thirtieth year. His figure was tall and commanding, strongly framed, and moulded at the same time in the best proportions. His face also was one of those upon which the glances of the other sex love to wander and linger. There was a trace upon it, however, of grave and serious earnestness, which showed that notwithstanding his youth, the knight had already advanced so far in life as to have known some of its burdens and disappointments. Yet it could not be said that there was anything like despondency in its expression; on the contrary, every look and motion seemed to speak quiet self-reliance, confidence and courage. He endured the gaze of those around him without emotion, and said, turning to the prelate, "It is true, holy father, as the noble baron has declared. I, myself, was present when the treaty was concluded. A truce for ten years was agreed to and signed by the chiefs of either nation. Nor were the most solemn oaths wanting to confirm it; both have sworn upon the writings which they esteem most sacred to preserve its conditions inviolate."

"It is impossible!" cried the cardinal, striking his hands together. "It is not to be believed that they should thus betray their faith—thus, with the eyes of Christendom upon them. By thine honor as a knight, is this true?"

"My word is already passed for what I have said," replied the other coldly, and with a tone of pride which brought the blood to the brow of the angry prelate, who, turning to the baron, exclaimed, "Who is this bold messenger? I would not trust mine eyes had they beheld it. My tongue could not utter it, lest the baseness of the tale should cleave to my speech and taint it with treason and with falsehood. Who is he? what claim has he upon our confidence?"

"By St. Stephen, thou art a very Infidel," cried the baron impatiently, "and I care not to satisfy thy incredulity. Yet for this knight, I will say it—I were ungrateful did I not, seeing that I owe my life to him—he is the soul of honor, the very essence of truth, loyalty and courage."

"Tut, tut—tell me not of bravery and knightly honor," said the prelate. "What is his name and rank? The bearer of such tidings, methinks, should have some better vouchers for his truth than courage, which I hope is not rare among your warriors."

"His name!" said the baron, casting his eyes in some perplexity upon the knight; "well, he is called the Walachian—I know no other; but this I know, Sir Priest, thou must look with sharp eyes among thine own train to find his equal in bravery and nobleness. And now a truce with thy questioning, for I am weary of it. My blood runs hastily already with the fever of my wounds; to quicken it, might breed a broil among us which I would willingly avoid, seeing ye are guests beneath my roof."

During the words of Von Arnheim, the young knight had remained calm and unmoved, as if the scornful doubt of the prelate had no power to stir up indignation in the deep quiet of his soul. Though manifesting no haste nor eagerness, yet he was ready with a reply when the baron had ended. "It is discourteously done, Sir Priest," he said, speaking in a firm, clear voice, and using the Italian with a tone and accent, as perfect as if it had been his native tongue, "it is discourteous and ungentle to question the word of a soldier, and one also unknown to thee. It is not my wont to seek idle quarrels, and least of all with such as thy garb in part proclaims thee to be, but if there be belted knight in thy train who will uphold thy words, I will, with God's help, find a speedy remedy for his incredulity."

"Answer not, gentlemen," exclaimed the prelate, turning to those around him. "My grief at these sad tidings has carried me beyond myself. Let it pass, Di Rimini," he added, with more emphasis, seeing that the latter had taken the gauntlet from his hand. "And for thee, Sir Walachian, I crave pardon for my distrust of thy tidings. The news was hard for me," he continued, suffering a cloud of grief to settle on his brow. "As legate of his holiness, the Pope, I might meet indulgence at thy hands, if for the moment I could not credit a tale which will sound so harshly to his ears."

The announcement of his sacred character and rank, above all, the winning, noble manner which the cardinal could so easily assume, banished all anger from the bosom of the young knight, and he replied, "It is passed, my lord, it is forgotten," and then betook himself again to his former position.

"I myself have spoken over hastily," said the baron, "but I thought not that I stood in such presence. My poor dwelling holds then the noble Juliani Cesarini, the cardinal of St. Angelo?"

"Such is my name and rank," said the prelate. "And I bring with me a noble knight, Pandolfo, Marquis Di Rimini, who with these gentlemen thou dost here see has come hither to draw sword for thy Hungary."

"They are welcome all, most welcome," cried Von Arnheim. "We have long looked for thy coming; but how should I have known thee, my lord cardinal? What wonder was it?"

"Ha! thou dost mean this harness!" rejoined the prelate. "Thou didst not think to see us clothed in this wise with mail and with the sword girded at our side. But know, most worthy host, that though we mingle not in worldly warfare, yet in a cause like this we deem lightly of danger, neither do we hold it unseemly, or unbecoming our peaceful office to buckle on armor, and draw blade against the enemies of our holy faith."

"God and the saints strike with thee, holy father, when once it comes so far," exclaimed the baron. "But the supper smokes upon the board. Draw near, my lord cardinal. Will it please you gentlemen, sit and partake of a poor repast?"

"It comes most welcome," said Juliani, and approaching with courtly

grace the daughter of the baron, he offered his hand to lead her to the table. She hesitated for a moment, blushed, then accepted the courtesy, and they advanced together toward the upper end of the board. The rest followed, and took their seats in due order.

"Fill up—fill up!" cried Von Arnheim. "It shall be the first thing. By your leaves, not a morsel shall pass our lips, until we have drowned this foolish quarrel in a bowl of wine."

"So thou thyself will pledge us, worthy baron," said Juliani.

"Aye, by St. Stephen, though my head must smart for it on the morrow. Let it mount to the brim—and now, oblivion to our differences, one and all."

"It smacks well," said the cardinal, setting down the goblet which he had drained to the bottom.

"Ha! ye were weary, and I do not wonder at it," was the reply.

"Nay, the wine is of a rare flavor, worthy host, and the abundance of thy board mocks even our hunger."

"There is no lack in our forests, of such meats as thou dost see before thee. For the quality of our cookery, and the daintiness of our sauces, I can say but little.

"Our thoughts on this point thou wilt soon see, I trow, if thou dost not hear them."

"So I would rather—fall to, then, gentlemen, and give the viands your best praise." A substantial meal consisting of boar's flesh, venison and various wild fowl, was now eaten with an appetite that left little room for discourse. It was seasoned by frequent draughts of wine, which were not long in manifesting their influence. The cardinal became affable and cheerful. Di Rimini seemed to have forgotten his mortification, and the Walachian gazed oftener and longer in the bright eyes of Bertha, the baron's daughter. Nay, even the maiden herself appeared to partake of the general gaiety, and more than once returned the glances of the latter, with a friendly and confiding expression, which indicated that they were neither displeasing nor strange to her. The pale monk alone seemed unmoved by the spirit which prevailed about the board. He sat apart making a frugal meal of bread and water, seasoned by the simplest vegetables and herbs. The goblet stood before him untouched; even the pledge of reconciliation was passed unnoticed, an omission which, when commented upon by those nearest him, he excused with the plea of a vow.

When the hunger of the guests was for the most part appeased, and the tasting of the various dishes had become a matter of pastime, was less assiduously pursued, and left intervals for more grave and continued discourse, the cardinal spoke. "I had not thought, most worthy baron," he said, "to recall a subject which has brought us so near to anger and strife. But all is now happily forgotten, I doubt not. The quality of thy wines has turned us to mirth and friendliness."

"It is your true peacemaker, when kept within bounds," was the reply—

"I will trust then somewhat to its influence, for I would gladly learn further of the condition of thy land, of the chances of the past campaign, of all indeed, which concerns the common weal of Christendom."

"A nice and doubtful matter," rejoined the baron. "Yet I think not but it may be ventured if handled warily. It were well, however, to keep a curb upon our tongues; for like an untamed horse, it is hard reining them when once in career. Ha! by St. Stephen! it is a good thought. What sayest thou, my lord cardinal? He who exceeds the bounds of courteous speech, shall do penance in a cup of Tokay—so shall he find at the same time medicine and punishment for his fault."

"Be it so—be it so," replied Juliani, laughing. "If my tongue will not be ruled, I know of no more grateful chastisement than to pass over it the draught of yon cool and pungent liquid. "Yet, by my patron, St. Julian, it is but an inviting to anger."

"Believe it not," said Von Arnheim. "Stands not the wine free?"

"I assent to it," rejoined the cardinal; "But where to find an umpire, for some one must judge between us. I myself would play the part, but that like the rest, I also may offend in this wise."

"Yonder sits a holy father," said the baron, pointing to Antonio; view his smile, his merry eye; nature has marked him for the office. Every feature declares his fitness. Scarcely will there a word of anger pass those lips."

The good father turned his broad smiling countenance toward the baron, bowed meekly, and answered, "Too much honor for a humble monk—too much, to be thus lauded, thus exalted. Yet will I take it upon me in all humility, although my temper is not guarded on every point—not every point noble baron."

"Then must thou have the greater care, holy father," replied the baron. "For the penalty thou shalt escape in no wise. I myself will judge if thou dost offend."

"Be it so," said the monk, "bearing in mind the frailty of man, and that this subject is that which moves me above all others. When I see pagans, ferocious, and heathenish on the one hand," he continued, growing suddenly indignant and frowning angrily, until his eyes were completely lost behind his pendulous brows, and all without evident cause; "when I see them heathenish and pestilent, I say, and on the other hand Christians, slothful, lukewarm, negligent of honor—ah me, how am I carried beyond myself—alas, alas, that we are made of such clay!"

"Thou wilt not forget then," said the baron, nodding, and pointing with a smile to his goblet.

"Peccavi. I have sinned, and will not fly from a righteous penance. I thus make atonement, and fill high and drink deep, as a warning to all knights,

churchmen, aye, and maidens also—that they may know with what judgment I shall judge them. As thou hast said, it is a medicine for anger,” he added, taking the emptied goblet from his lips, and discovering a face that beamed with smiles.

“Maidens, saidst thou, good father?” exclaimed Bertha. “I will not believe that thou wouldst condemn me to drain a goblet like that, if by any chance my tongue should move a little otherwise than thou wouldst have it.”

“I see not wherefore,” replied Antonio. “I must shut mine eyes to thy fair conditions, to thy youth, thy comeliness. I must be blind, blind I say, for so is justice pictured to us. Yet there is doubtless present, many a good knight who would quaff a cup of wine, as readily as couch lance for the sake of beauty. I myself might suffer so much for a damsel thus fair and worthy.”

“Nay, let the maiden look to it,” said the baron. “If she be not discreet she shall even do penance with the rest. It will but draw her night gear a rife closer or so, and she will sleep the more soundly for it.”

“I look to thee then, holy father, for thy protection,” said Bertha, casting a sweet, supplicating glance toward the monk.

“Protection!” cried the old man, “ah! what a word is that! and my protection! Well, I will do my devoir, as yonder knights would say.”

“And now, worthy baron,” said the cardinal taking up the word, “I could learn more of this truce. Thou, sir knight, wast present at the Diet, thou sayst?”

“I was at Segeddin when the truce was signed, my lord cardinal,” replied the Walachian.

“The terms of that truce then,—wilt thou not rehearse them to me once more?” said Juliani. “They should have been most favorable, for the advantage of war lay with your arms.”

“They were so,” answered the other. “We obtained all we could have asked for, and more, much more. Servia is restored to its ruler, all prisoners were returned unransomed, and the Danube is henceforth to be the boundary of the Turkish dominions. Here, methinks, is advantage of no slight moment.”

And thus has the Ottoman acknowledged sway over a fair portion of Europe,” replied the cardinal. “How sounds this to Christian ears?” he continued, looking around him. “There is a stain, Sir Knight—I must needs say it—a foul stain upon the honor of thine arms.”

“Our brave monarch, the gallant John Huniades, and other noble knights who couched lance in that war, would hardly allow this judgment, my lord cardinal,” said the Walachian, with a tone of anger. “Believe me, they would appeal from thy decision.”

“It is too warmly said,” cried father Antonio. “Fill thy goblet, therefore, worthy knight, and do homage to the law. Here, at least, no appeal will help thee.”



"There was a time," said the cardinal, who, lost in his own thoughts, had not noticed what was passing, and even now seemed speaking as if he were alone; "there was a time when if the cross was elevated, Europe rose like a single man, even though the holy banner led across the sea. That was an age! that was a faith and honor! Now they are well content to give up a part, if they may but enjoy the other part in slothfulness and safety. But tell me rather, Sir Walachian, of your victories over the Infidel. Ye met the dogs and smote them."

"Aye, at Sofia, where good deeds were done," replied the knight. "Cimeter there met two-handed sword, lance met jerrid, and many a brave blow was struck with axe and mace, which cleft turban and rider, and hurled steed to the earth. The day was ours, and darkness alone saved the Pagan host from utter ruin."

"And at Istatu? there was still better work?" rejoined Juliani.

"Aye, our advantage was greater," said the Walachian. "The Moslem was routed, and we took many prisoners."

"Nay, by St. Stephen, I will speak something of that field," cried Von Arnheim warmly. For two days we had been lying in front of the Moslem, who was well posted and surpassed us much in numbers, and neither of us appeared eager to begin the onset. The enemy would not leave his heights, and it seemed fool-hardy—so said the oldest among us—to assault him at such disadvantage. At last, on the second day—it wanted yet three hours of night—the word came from Huniades that we should mount our horses and advance, as the infidel trusting to his entrenchments, had detached a part of his force to make a circuit, and fall upon our rear. Lances were placed in rest, and we rode up the hill amid a flourish of trumpets, waving of pennons, each knight shouting his cry of battle. I had a good steed under this old body, which bore me into the thickest of the enemy, and it was with my right good will. At the first shock, the centre of their host was shaken by Huniades and his Transylvanians, but upon the left they pressed us hard, for the Bey himself was on this point with his Spahis, raging like the fiend—nay, if the truth be told, our Hungarians were drawing backward, when I rode in. I cut down two of the dogs, crossed blades with a third, but they swarmed about me like bees; one cleft the casque from my head, another felled my horse, and before I could draw my feet from the stirrups, the cimeter of Ali Pacha was raised over me. I know not how it was, but he seemed to pause a moment—I could offer no defence, seeing that I was wounded in many places, and was besides, as I said, bareheaded. I have thought at times that some touch of honor stirred in him for once, at the sight of these old hairs. Be this as it may, I was gone past help, if he had struck me as I lay. But all in a moment the press was borne backward again, yonder knight with some scores of his wild riders was to the rescue, and things soon changed face. Within the hour the Ottoman leader was a prisoner, and his army overthrown and in full flight. Our lady be praised, I owe my life to him."

"Took ye many captives, and much spoil?" asked the old monk.

"Twelve standards, two thousand prisoners, and a rich booty."

"By mine honor, it was well done," said the cardinal. "Bravely done," cried Di Rimini. "I would give half my lands to have couched lance in that field." "And I," "and I," echoed many a knight, hurried away by the enthusiasm which the baron's recital had aroused in their bosoms.

"It is carried too far," exclaimed father Antonio. "There is an undue elevation around the board, which, if not anger itself, is so near akin thereto, that I deem it fitting to punish it as such. Most noble cardinal and knights, and thou, our worthy host, replenish your goblets. The fault seems general and universal, therefore let all unite in obedience, and bow in peace to the cup of penitence."

"'Tis well. Fill high!" cried the cardinal. "To the brave who fell at Istatu. They saved their honor."

"I fill," said the baron, after this pledge had been honored, and he spoke with some severity of tone, yet looking gaily around and right heartily; "I fill to the living who fought on that field. Their honor is stainless." This pledge was also drunk, but moodily and in silence.

"And now, in all humility," cried the monk, "in all humility do I propose it; those who died on that field have been remembered, and those who fought thereon and are living to tell of it. Now would it not be fitting, I say, would it not be equitable to quaff a cup to those who would gladly have been present in that conflict, but were hindered by untoward events, who—"

"Who came somewhat late, thou wouldst say, holy father," interrupted Von Arnheim.

"It was my meaning, noble baron. Thou hast happily and pithily expressed it. Fill then to those who were eager to meet the Infidel, but came, as our worthy host hath said, unhappily came somewhat late."

"Nay, spare us this grace, good Antonio," said the cardinal, while his face glowed with vexation, and he suffered his goblet to remain unfilled. "That an unhappy fate so ordered it that we were hindered in our journey hither, may long be remembered here in Hungary; but let not our unpurposed tardiness be passed like a gay pledge around the board. Though for our desire to wield sword against those dogs, I will answer for it, we stand in this no whit behind those who made this peace with them."

"It seems angrily spoken," rejoined the monk; "behold the penalty awaits thee."

Juliani forced a smile upon his face, quaffed a full goblet, and then led the conversation upon subjects of a different nature. He spoke of the country around, of the chase, of horse and hound, of whatever, indeed, has interest for such as those by whom he was surrounded and in this way the discourse again became gay and mirthful. During this while the judgments of father Antonio were freely dispensed, yet not with that impartiality which the good man had at first proposed to himself. At the outset, the idea of pen-

alty seemed alone to possess his mind, and the Walachian and Von Arnheim suffered chiefly from his severity. It was not long, however, before he became altogether of a different way of thinking, and accused himself in his thoughts of great injustice towards the cardinal, towards Di Rimini and those of his train. The effects of this fancy soon became evident. Now must the cardinal drain a goblet which the monk would have well filled; now must Di Rimini suffer for his hastiness; and again, various knights, or perhaps all of them united, must do like penance, except the Hungarians, who, as he asserted, demeaned themselves like models of propriety. The fair Bertha had remained for the most part silent while the discourse turned upon the war, and hitherto, father Antonio had found no pretext for manifesting his good will and friendliness towards her. When they spoke, however, of matters of a lighter nature, such as she might claim some right to judge of, her voice was heard at intervals, sometimes low and soft in answer or question to the young knight who sat next her, and again sounding clear and shrill as she addressed or replied to some one at a greater distance, across the table it might be, or down the long row at her side. It could not be said, in truth, that she spoke at any time with hastiness or anger, and still the monk seemed to be of a different opinion, and after various admonitory threatenings, imposed the much dreaded penalty. It was in vain that she reasoned with him,—by turns sweetly implored and indignantly remonstrated; he was deaf to her words; he found her headstrong, self-willed, refractory, grounds enough, as he declared, to confirm him in his decision. Seeing that he remained inexorable, she arose, placed the goblet to her lips, and courageously drained it to the bottom. A flush rose upon her cheek, the old wine mounted to her forehead, and sparkled nobly from her eye, then bidding all a hasty and laughing good night, she hurried with a gay, free step from the apartment.

During the meal, the strange monk, as has been said, sat apart from the rest. The solicitations of those nearest him, the repeated wish of his host, could not move him from his frugal repast, nay, hardly draw from him a reply. He appeared, for the most part, buried in thought, yet a careful observer might have seen that he was not wholly inattentive to the discourse around him. At times, indeed, a glance of deep interest prevailing over the cold steadfastness of his features, gleamed unconsciously from his dark eye. This chiefly was the case when the conversation turned upon the war, and more particularly while the Walachian rehearsed the terms and conditions of the truce. When, however, the prudence of the cardinal changed the theme, and led the discourse upon subjects of a general nature, he returned once more within himself, finished the viands that were before him in silence, then rose, and left the hall unnoticed.

Leaving the cardinal and the foreign knights to enjoy that hospitality which was so willingly afforded them, let us accompany the old man for a short distance upon his way.

## CHAPTER IV.

## REMINISCENCES.

WHEN the monk had descended into the courtyard, he stopped for a moment, raised his cowl from his features, looked upward to the stars which shone above, and muttered, while his bosom heaved with a deep respiration, "I now breathe freely again—his presence taints the very air. Sleep I cannot, under the same roof with him, within the same walls. I cannot endure him near me, save beneath the spreading heavens, where the pure air comes pressing down upon us, and poison-bearing vapors escape above, nothing tainting it, to form the storms which desolate the earth, aye, and sometimes its gay night-lights, its glancing meteors." He now sought out his steed from among the rest, a strong brown charger, threw himself upon the saddle, and having crossed the drawbridge, gained the bank of the river, and rode slowly along its margin.

His face was still uncovered. A smile illumined his pale, stern features, a smile of joy, perhaps, or fierce pleasure, but not of peace. He rode on regularly, at times checking the progress of his horse, yet scarcely knowing that he did so, to give vent in words to the emotions that lay struggling in his bosom. "The time perhaps approaches. This truce leaves my hand unfettered. I have sworn not to strike while he wears the cross upon his breast, though he wears it for his own honor and profit, not for love of him who died thereon. Heaven grant me strength to keep this vow. Yet I have not sworn thus without reserve—no, no, mark that, ye stars—should sudden danger come upon him, should death closely threaten him, this hand shall snatch its vengeance. Disease shall not take him from me, unless by God's decree it come like lightning. I shall stand at his bedside to howl my wrongs into his ear and to deal out the recompense. War with its perils shall not cross my purpose, if the resolute watch of one so injured—fiends of hell! if my careful watch can shield him from its dangers, or strike before them, if inevitable. Time was when I would have stabbed him at the altar, in his robes, with the host in his hand, aye, in the blessed sepulchre of Christ, had his own arm driven the Infidels from that hallowed soil. But I am changed—not that vengeance is less dear to me—sits it not here, close at my heart?—but things sacred have now more power over me; upon my worn soul for years past heavenly influences have been thronging, stealing with the lapse of time part of my sorrows and sins, and many of my doubts and fears. Oh, oftentimes has God been good to me! Yet there is one spot within my bosom that religion can never enter, where man, unsubdued, native man sits in his strength and ruthlessness—that spot is dedi-

cated to revenge. I ask mercy, pardon for it, but never will resign it, we are the price eternity."

"And how could I forget?" exclaimed the old man, in a voice which echoed widely over the heath; and he shook feebly his right hand in the air. "Ye heavens, who have looked upon my wrongs, answer me. Bears not this arm the mark—but that is a little thing—is not my heart seared as with a heated iron, even to its core, by his fiendish malice? Ha!—he does not know me. Years of keen, bitter sorrow have marred these features. I am old ere scarce my prime has passed. Oh, in this too hath God befriended me! Deep, withering passion, has banished from my face all that might meet the eye of friendly or of hostile recognition, yet had he the revenge to sigh for, for which I sigh, he could not forget me thus." As the old man rode onward his mood appeared to change, his eye became moist, his head sank upon his breast, and he seemed to lose himself in thought. Presently he checked his steed, close by the brink of the river, and continued in a soft tone: "How did my heart leap as yonder knight told his tidings. It was the old Hungarian which he spoke. In those tones a voice seemed to come to me from the past—I thought by heaven—but no, no, it was fancy. The same emotion stirred within me as the Moslem first greeted us. It was the language, nought else, that moved me so. Yet when the others spoke of the baron and he, it touched no cord within my bosom. Why was this, ha Shadows, shadows—it was but the language spoken by beautiful and youthful lips, such as I see often in my dreams. How old remembrances throng around me as I enter this land. They almost soften my heart, turned as it is to stone—tears almost start into these parched eyes, memory like a flood comes back upon my soul, bearing with it the wrecked treasures of the past. It will pass and leave me still desolate, buoyed up by one hope, one wish alone. Yet let me melt, let me for a moment be what I once was in Hungary—happy lover. This is the stream that rippled joyfully to our feet as we stepped together to its margin. How often in calm, cheerful mood have we spoken of committing ourselves to its bosom. Together, we would not fear to venture, we said, and thus escape, perhaps, a sad and varied future. Did I not hear the fiend laugh as we talked thus of evading his power? These stars, too, have lighted us, and yon moon which we have watched, night after night, from her crescent to her wane. I remember—keep down my heart—I remember how we used to watch for her when she had disappeared—to watch for her first faint coming in the west, and count our days by her, and wonder that they had passed so quickly. We thought her made only to beam upon our love. Now, she shines there as bright, unaltered, and that love has streamed, after a faint flash, into everlasting night. Where is she now? What world does she inhabit? Couldst thou appear to me, Adhelaid, couldst thou come a spirit, and tell me, that, pure and washed of thy fault, thou hast thy home above these stars, I could feel that there is a heaven for me. I could forget this earth, its sorrows, its revenge. But away with

such thoughts, they make a child of me. I will think only that she was faithless, and that it was he who made her so." The thought changed him instantaneously. His face gleamed with the light of unquenchable, wild passion, he grasped the hammer that hung at his saddle bow, loosed his hold of it again, and then urged his horse furiously upon his path.

"So, ho! good monk!" cried a voice at his side, as he was in the act of drawing upon his bridle to check his speed. "What fiend drives thee by night at this pace over the plain?"

"It is now late, my son," replied the monk, "and I have far to ride ere I find shelter."

"Hadst thou ridden at this speed, holy father, since leaving yonder castle, I had hardly overtaken thee."

"I have ridden at an uneven pace," was the reply. "There are many things in this glorious night that have delayed me."

"It is indeed a glorious night," said the Walachian. "Yet 'tis pity for thy steed, that as far as he has carried thee to-day, thou must needs put him to further toil. Could not yonder castle have answered thee? The old baron is not grudging of hospitality."

"It might not be," was the reply.

"'Tis pity for thy steed, that——"

"Well, say on, why dost thou pity my steed?" said the monk, seeing that the young knight did not conclude his sentence.

"That his master is not a knight rather than a priest," continued the Walachian. "Ye churchmen know little the worth of a beast like this one thou dost bestride. Rarely have ye much at stake upon his noble nature, and ye scruple not therefore to peril his best properties for the convenience of an hour. If a good horse has but rested some days in your stables, and is well gorged with provender, ye think forsooth, ye may straitway use him as ye list. If a matter of some moment urges, ye will course along, if in the mood, or draw rein and give yourselves to meditation and edifying thoughts, and then as if this delay had an easy remedy, ye will spur onward with a speed at which no one should ride, except to save life or limb, when a steady, well-ordered pace would by far sooner have brought you to your aim."

"I thank thee for thy reproof, sir knight," answered the monk. "I will henceforth remember it when my need urges me. When the goal is far, it is true an even, steady course leads us to it oftentimes sooner than unreflecting haste. But thou art he who brought these tidings of the truce."

"Right, father; though scarcely at this time do they deserve the name of tidings. They seemed to trouble much yonder holy cardinal."

"Art thou sure that there is no error in them?"

"St. Mary! wilt thou still doubt?" cried the young knight, in a clear and echoing tone, which differed greatly from the mild and almost hesitating manner which he hitherto had worn.

The old man started, gazed upon him steadfastly for a moment, and then said quickly, "What is thy name, thy home, the land of thy birth?"

"Thou hast already heard, I am a Walachian," was the reply.

"Yet thou hast dwelt in Italy," said the monk. "Nay, thou dost speak the language as purely as if thou hadst been reared there from thy childhood."

"It was in that land that I first bore arms as page to our noble leader the Waivode of Transylvania. But as I have said, I am a Walachian."

"Oh, then it is but fancy," murmured the old man, and his eyes filled with tears. "Yet who are thy parents? what is thy rank, thy lineage?—but it cannot be."

"Heaven's grace! Sir Monk, of what base metal are ye priests of Italy compounded, that ye put no faith in the word of a soldier, but must ask after his rank, as if, forsooth, a true tongue were found only with gentle blood; but believe as thou wilt, the tidings are as I have told thee."

"Oh, I doubt them not! It was not for this that I inquired of thy lineage," exclaimed the old man. "But let me look upon thy face for a moment. Thy voice has touched a chord—let me gaze upon thy face. This face is manly and bold," he said, after he had gazed, "and this frame strong beyond that of most men. Thine eyes are dark and full of fire; is it not so?"

"They are dark," replied the knight in wonder.

"Those which I knew were soft as the blue of heaven," said the monk tremulously, and turned his glance upward. It returned again, and wandered over the person of the Walachian, who was completely armed, as if seeking something which should end his doubts. After a short scrutiny, he shook his head, turned, drew upon his bridle and pressed his steed onward. His companion followed his example, and for some moments both were silent, the speed at which they rode affording no opportunity for discourse. After a short time their pace slackened, and the younger asked, "Dost thou find, good father, in my face or form, the likeness of one whom thou hast known?—a friend or brother, perhaps?"

"Oh, how these fancies cheat us!" cried the old man sorrowfully and bitterly. "But not for the first time am I thus deceived. What a strange thing is the heart of man. A store-house is it of noble and of beastly purposes, of strange illusions and realities. We ponder oftentimes upon a deed mould and shape it to our thoughts, invest it with fair attributes, and at last act boldly that which at first we would not whisper to our fellow-men. Thus likewise, is it with its illusions and realities. We hang our happiness sometimes upon certain lineaments, upon a certain mould of form, and believe fondly that perfect loveliness is found therein. We muse upon them, long long after they are lost, lock them within our memory, and when upon the way of life we meet a form or face of beauty, we see again those old features which were once so dear to us, and for the time find pleasure in the illusion. What children are we then, and how does our great Father lead us to our good with kind deceit."

"By my faith, Sir Monk, this sounds somewhat harshly," said the Walachian. "Small is my learning, but to my ears thy words smack of blasphemy. Dost thou attribute deceit to *Him*? Wilt thou so far venture as to cast this reproach upon one who is truth itself?"

"Who will sit in judgment on the Most High, and declare that to do this or that would be unworthy of Him? Oh, it is oftentimes a good thing to be deceived. Why, then, shall not a good being cheat us into happiness? Is not this life an illusion, and hope an arch deceiver, given by him to entice us on the way?"

These words seemed to touch the bosom of the young knight. He sighed deeply, and exclaimed, "Oh, it is indeed good at times to be deceived. I, also, holy father, have my hopes. They may prove vain; a day may suffice to quench them; but while they beam before me, my way is light, and I tread onward without fear."

"God prosper thee in them, my son," said the old man. "But let me hear thy voice once more. Speak as thou didst a moment gone. Let it echo across the heath as though thou wert sounding thy cry of battle."

"Not on this spot, good father," said the Walachian, "lest we startle the sentinels upon their watch. Yon dark masses are the walls of Buda."

"Buda!" said the old man. "Are we so soon here? We part, then, Sir Knight."

"Nay, wilt thou not ride into the city, or cross with me to the camp where my tent will afford thee comfortable shelter?"

"I have to ride southwardly," said the monk, pointing in that direction.

"Thou must travel far ere thou wilt find a shelter. Better to cross with me, and repose for the night. In the morning thou canst start refreshed, and with rested steed."

"Nay, I care not for shelter; the heath or the nearest forest will suffice. Take my blessing with thee, my son; yet one word ere we part. Thou hast this night made to thyself a dangerous enemy. Beware of him! farewell!"

"Whom dost thou mean, father?" said the young knight, detaining him. "Yonder gay cavalier, who would have accepted my too eager challenge?"

"Not him: from such foes I doubt not thy good sword can defend thee."

"The cardinal Juliani Cæsarini thou dost mean then, for with none other of these strangers have I changed word to-night. Is it he?"

"Aye, and a dangerous enemy thou wilt find him."

"I care not for him. I hold his enmity even as lightly as that of yonder gay marquis who bears him company. But thou errest, father: There was a brush of anger between us, enough to warm our souls, but it is drowned in the old baron's wine."

"His anger, his enmity cannot be drowned in wine. Let goblet after goblet cover it until the smooth surface smiles with friendliness, yet it but



slumbers sooner or later to break forth, seeking that which alone can quench it—blood—destruction.”

“I thank thee for thy warning, father, but by heaven I do not fear him.”

“See also, that thou dost not trust him, nor be deceived by his smooth courtesy. Mischief will be afoot when yonder priest once enters into thy camp. Let none know that I have warned thee, but do thou beware. Farewell!” With these words he turned the head of his steed, pressed his sides with his unarmed heel, and in a moment was coursing at full speed southwardly. The Walachian gazed after him for a moment. “Strange being,” he exclaimed; “speaks he of danger from yon cardinal? I have no fear. By St. Demetrius, he cannot harm me were he the Pope himself, whose legate he claims to be.” With these words he gave the rein to his horse, and rode slowly into the city.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE CAMP.

BUDA, now the capital of Hungary, stands upon the western bank of the Danube. Even in the early part of the fifteenth century (the time of which we write) it was a populous and well fortified city. The village of Pesth, since grown into a town of considerable magnitude and importance, lay opposite Buda, and was connected with it by a bridge of boats thrown across the stream, which at this point is about three-fourths of a mile in width. To the southward of Pesth extends a wide plain, called the Field of Rakosch, upon which the Christian army was encamped. For the space of a mile in extent along the river, and stretching about half that distance from its banks, the plain was whitened with the Hungarian tents. They lay scattered over its surface, some in even rows, others singly or in groups, and in every variety of form and structure. Upon the margin of the stream, which rose gently into a slight eminence above the plain, were erected the tents of the chiefs. These might easily be known as such by their size, their commodious form, the fineness of the materials of which they were constructed, and the various banners which fluttered near them; during most hours of the day, the field afforded a gay and busy spectacle. Here might be seen the soldiers engaged in their warlike exercises, or contending with each other in various manly pastimes, or seated in groups listening to tales of martial adventure, and rending the air with their hoarse merriment. Bands of mounted horsemen

often enlivened the scene as they spurred through the windings of the encampment, and often a group of plumed riders with belts and golden spurs, and it might be, accompanied by fair dames, coursed joyously along the banks of the river. The peasants of the surrounding country often thronged hither, the men with provisions for the soldiers, and the maidens to deal out their lighter wares, when, if they would make a good traffic, they must listen to much rude and licentious mirth. Such was the scene at ordinary times. We would, however, bring the field of Rakosch before the reader at an hour when all is as yet still, and direct his attention to two tents, which lay at the northern extremity of the encampment. They were placed near the river, commanding a view of the city opposite, of the banks of the Danube for some distance above it, and of the bridge of boats which connected Buda with Pesth. They were commodious in size and structure, and resembled in general those which have been noticed as belonging to the chiefs of the army.

The day which followed the occurrences previously related, had not well begun to dawn, when an individual in Turkish apparel stepped from the entrance of the southernmost of these two tents, the situation of which has been described. His years might be about four and twenty. In person he was below the middle height, yet he seemed strongly framed, so far as the garments which he wore would permit this to appear. The upper part of his body was clothed in a vest of red stuff, thickly wadded with cotton; the lower in blue trowsers of an enormous size, and upon his head he wore the high and pointed kulah, or cap of red felt. The quality of these garments betokened that his capacity was that of a menial or slave, and his manner and words were not at variance with this character. He bore in his hands a vessel filled with water, which he placed upon the ground, then returned into the tent and reappeared in a moment with a sedjeade, or small carpet, which he spread near it. He then looked along the course of the river and across the plain, and then again towards Buda, but no where was there any thing to be seen. A heavy mist which lay upon the morning hid every object from view, and scarcely suffered the eye to penetrate it beyond the distance of a few yards. The Moslem seemed much disturbed, shook his head mournfully, and exclaimed "Allah!" then turned to pry again into the gray dense curtain which confined his vision.

After a long, earnest and useless gaze, he shook his head once more, repeated his exclamation, and added, "I can no where make it out. The mist I can see—the accursed mist, but beyond this, nothing—not a tent, not a tree, nor the river, nothing, nothing. If I durst speak I could say whose eyes are blinded by a heavier and darker mist than this is. But my words would pass for nothing. He shall hear them, however; I can bear it no longer; he shall hear, though he should strike me with his poniard upon the spot. But now to my devotions as well as I may." So saying, he took his place upon the carpet, removed his turban and sandals, and commenced his ablutions. These he performed with great formality. He first washed his hands, then

his face and beard from the top of the forehead to the throat, and behind the ears ; he next bathed his arms to the elbows, then dipped three fingers of the right hand into the water, and passed it across his head ; after this he washed his feet to the ancles. All this he repeated thrice with great care, beginning each time upon the right side, as a true believer should. Last of all he rinsed his mouth and nostrils as many times, rubbed his teeth with a kind of bitter olive, and then his Abdesth being ended, he disposed himself upon his carpet, with his head toward the south, to pray. Before he commenced, however, he looked out once more into the mist, seemed irresolute, and at last changed his position, placing his head towards Buda, and his feet in a contrary direction.

During this while, the Bey of Roumelia had come from his tent, and stood for a moment watching the perplexity of his servant. At the first, a smile stole upon his features, but the next instant this smile gave way to an expression of grief. Nay, it appeared as if something like self-reproach or shame stirred in the bosom of the Moslem, for his face colored with a shade of crimson, as he exclaimed : " What is it that disturbeth thee, Youssouf ? What is it that troubleth thee in thy devotions ? "

" Oh, my lord," replied the other, " Allah be praised, that thou art arisen I cannot find the Kebab. Yon mountain, which thou didst point out to me, is hidden by the mist, and I know not the direction of the Holy City. "

" Bow as thou dost see me," said Ali Pacha, and turning his face in the direction nearly opposite to that chosen by the slave, he commenced to repeat the prayer of day-break. Youssouf followed the example of his master with great care, and for a few moments there was silence, broken only by the muttered prayer.

" My mind misgave me," cried Youssouf, when they had risen from the ground, " and it was so—my feet were turned towards the holy city. The prophet intercede for me ! "

" Why couldst thou not tarry till I came forth ? " asked his master.

" See, my lord, thou wast sleeping soundly as I passed thy couch, and I said to myself, ' he needs yet a little slumber, my master. He came into his tent last night at a late hour, and how know I what fatigue and labor he may have undergone. He needs yet a little slumber, and may deem it fitting to let the hour of prayer pass by. ' "

" When hast thou ever known me to delay or omit my devotions ? " said Ali, with some sternness.

" Never, my lord, certainly never, but time might bring it to this. Well, thus I said to myself, and came out of the tent to pray alone. Here found I this mist—the tents, the river, the mountain, all were covered by it, as if for my sins the darkness of Egypt had come on purpose to bewilder me. Even now I have some doubt. Allah help us if both are altogether in the wrong. "

" Wherefore dost thou fear, Youssouf ? " said his master. " If it were so in truth—if it should be that we are in error, shall it be accounted to us as

sin? Will Allah—the All Merciful, hold us guilty if we worship him as he hath commanded, so far as the means are placed within our power?”

“That is it!” exclaimed Youssouf, with great earnestness, “that is it, my lord; so far as the means are placed within our power. But is it so with us?”

“Peace, peace!” interrupted Ali Pacha. “For the direction of the Holy City, I know it well, good Youssouf. Be at ease then. Yonder mountain, which I showed thee, lies between us and the site of Mecca. Towards this thou mightst easily turn, were it in the darkness of midnight.”

The slave shook his head. “Thou didst see how it was, oh, my lord. It was not from neglect or any wilfulness that I turned my feet thitherward. But I will mark it out upon the earth with stones, so soon as the sun shall dispel this accursed mist. Yet I would I were sure that yonder mountain stands aright.”

“I tell thee slave, I cannot mistake,” exclaimed Ali Pacha, angrily. “Abdallah’s tablets are reckoned truly for this point.”

“Abdallah bin Saadi is a good Musselman and a wise man, and has given himself much labor to prepare those tables for true believers. But he meant them, doubtless, for those whom some duty or constraint held in this benighted land; for the prisoner, or him whom the will of our august Sultan might lead hither to fight for the faith. How, if they should change in other hands! who can tell? for the wisdom of the Muredjim Abdallah is boundless as the sea! Do not smile, my lord. While I have doubts let me speak them. I feel as if my prayers were of no worth, so long as I am not sure that my face is turned toward Mecca. How different is it at Ederneh! How pleasing, how consoling to hear the Muezzin call out the summons to prayer. For the Keblah, we know it by every object around us. There is not a divan, a table, a fountain in thy whole dwelling which I cannot kneel by without looking farther, and feel sure that I am turned as near as may be toward the city of our blessed Prophet, the salvation and peace of God be unto him! And if in a strange house, or an unknown quarter of the city, we need but glance at the minaret, mark the posture of the Muezzin, and straightway bow down and pray without doubt or fear. Were I sure of yonder mountain, I could remain with a better conscience among these Giaours. Not that I like this tarrying among the dogs,” continued the slave, seeing that his master did not reply, “this following of their customs, this handling of their weapons and the like—in these things, my lord, I must yield to thy will. But when I find myself uneasy in my devotions, my tongue will keep silence no longer.”

“I will put no constraint upon thee, Youssouf,” replied his master. “If thy conscience pricks thee, Allah forbid that I should keep thee in this land a moment longer. Thou art free, free this hour to retrace the road toward Ederneh.”

“I have a conscience also upon this point,” exclaimed Youssouf, while the tears came into his eyes. “What shall I say to the Chief Iman, to the

Muredjim Baschi, to the Vizier Khalil, and the other lords of the court, thy friends, when they inquire of me where I have left thee and wherefore? Shall I say that I feared to share the danger to which thou wast exposed here among these Infidels, or to risk a little the abode yonder, when thou art willing to put it to the hazard? No, no, by the beard of my grandfather, that shall no one hear of Youssouf ben Selim."

"Remain then until three suns have passed, and we will take our departure from this land. On the fourth day we will set our faces homeward."

"Oh, my lord, pardon me that I say it, but I have heard this from thy lips before. What should keep us a day, nay, an hour in this accursed camp? Why not mount steed at once, and journey gaily homeward?"

"I grant that thou art right, Youssouf," replied the Bey, "that it were well this moment to shake the dust of this land from our feet, and spur towards Ederneh. But I have that in hand which hinders me."

"What meanst thou by this, my lord? What yet wouldst thou learn from these dogs? If to speak their barbarous jargon, this thou hast already—if to wield their weapons, thou art as well skilled in these as their best knights. What remains then, what remains to keep thee?" Ali did not reply and Youssouf continued with more boldness: "Wouldst thou learn the measures which they tread? wouldst thou mingle in their dances, which, to a true believer—"

"Peace, fool!" interrupted the Bey, "thy words are without meaning, and pass the bounds of prudence. When hast thou known me stoop to such folly?"

"Is it the beauty of their maidens, then?" continued Youssouf, perseveringly. "Must I look to see thee yield thy heart to a damsel of Hungary, and forget those of Roumelia and Anatolia? Who is there in this land that may surpass in beauty the daughter of Khalil? the sisters Fatima and Zor-aide? or Leilah, the daughter of the wise Abdallah? But mine eyes have not been blind. On the day of the tournament I knew thee, my lord, through thy disguise. I heard those words which betrayed thee, as yon huge Earl came tumbling from his horse. Thus far all was well, but the true danger was what followed. The prize of valor was adjudged to thee, and bestowed by the Queen of the day, as she was called, the daughter of the old Baron Von Arnheim. Thou hadst won it fairly, yet I would it had been lost, and that the fortune of the fight had remained with the Earl of Cillia. Such a loss might easily have been repaired, but the heart—ah! this is a far different case. Since this, thou art altogether changed. I must ride often to bring thee news of her, how she fares, what employs her time, when she will come to the city or to the camp that thou mayst not miss the sight, what chamber in the castle is hers, what are her walks, and the like! Oh, yes, I see it well; all is lost unless thou wilt shake off this dream. Thou hast been reared from thy youth, my lord, by a wise and learned man, who has led thee in the paths of knowledge, and instructed thee in all which a great lord and a good Mussel-

man should learn ; who then would be more blamed for foolishness than thou, if thou shouldst exchange the fair hopes of a life like thine, for the caresses of a paltry maiden, one who is a spark, a glowworm—”

“Peace, thou slave !” exclaimed Ali Pacha, laying his hand upon his throat. “Breathe but a word against her, and it shall be thy last.”

“I place but little store upon my life, except for thy service,” was the reply ; “yet I think not that I deserve this at thy hands, my lord.”

“Thou art faithful,” said the Bey, “but this shall give no license to thy tongue. Yonder maiden, at least, deserves no blame at thy hands. Be assured, Youssouf, I have paid the last tribute to this passion, which it is useless to conceal from thee. Be satisfied it is not she who keeps me here, neither will I tarry beyond the time I have fixed. Step within the tent and fetch hither my cimeter. Near it thou wilt find a knight’s plume. The dogs !” he exclaimed with anger, “they would have compelled me ! By Allah, yon knight shall have an opportunity to make good his boasts.”

“It is a gay feather,” said Youssouf, as he returned. “Thou didst meet enemies upon the plain last night, my lord !”

“Aye, and as thou see’st, lost nothing by the encounter. Hang the plume by the door of my tent, and place my cimeter above it unsheathed. He will see it and demand a meeting. This over, I will turn my face towards our home.”

The slave’s eyes sparkled with pleasure. He proceeded to fasten the plume upon the outside of the tent, in a conspicuous place, where it could hardly fail of meeting the eyes of all who might pass. This done, he took his seat upon the earth, and busied himself with rubbing the blade of the cimeter with a piece of silken stuff, and he seemed to spare himself no trouble to polish it to the utmost. His master watched him for a while in silence, and then turned to look at the scene around. The sun had by this time arisen, and the day promised to be clear, although the mist which rose from the low grounds and the river, almost obscured his beams, as they came aslant over the far hills which shut in the horizon. The tents of the soldiers were visible for the most part, yet few were stirring. On the opposite bank of the Danube lay the city, a huge, indistinct mass, scarcely to be distinguished from some heavier portion of the mist, while the bridge which rested upon the river seemed to extend across an infinite cloud-covered ocean. The Moslem heaved a sigh as he gazed around him, and then sank gradually into profound thought. From this he was aroused by the sound of approaching footsteps. He turned and beheld the Walachian.

A smile played upon the features of the latter, as he returned the sedate greeting of the Moslem. “Thou art early stirring, Ali Pacha,” he said.

“With the dawning of the day, Sir Knight, as is the custom with me.”

“Thine adventure of last night, methinks, had afforded thee a fair plea for wasting an hour or so upon the couch more than thou art wont.”

“Thou hast heard of it already, then ?” asked the Moslem with surprise.

"Oh, yes," replied his companion gaily. "I supped last night at the castle with thy foreign friends, whom thou didst guide thither; and all went right merrily, although they entered in no very friendly mood. The parting with thee, as I guess, had somewhat untuned them; yet do not grieve for it, the old baron's wine made all good again."

"The Giaours! God curse them for their discourtesy," muttered the Moslem between his teeth. "I found them as evening fell, near the banks of the river, not knowing which way to turn them for a shelter. They begged my guidance in fair, smooth terms, and I led them to the castle. Here, in return for this, they would have made a prisoner of me."

"How didst thou escape them?" asked the knight.

"Zeinab," replied the other, simply.

"I would gladly have seen the pursuit," rejoined the Walachian, laughing. "There sat I in the castle, not dreaming that sport like this was going on so near me. I would have given a broad gold piece to see yon heavy, overburdened steeds toiling after thy fleet Arab."

"Thou wouldst have seen more than this," said the Moslem. "I awaited the shock of one of the knights, the leader, I think, of the band; for I could not bring myself to flee outright. I avoided the assault, and as he passed me, severed the plume from his casque. Thou see'st it yonder, and Youssouf is furbishing my cimeter to hang near it. This will signify that he who would have the feather must first meet the blade."

"Plainly, plainly," cried the knight. "He will pass to-day, and it cannot fail to spur him to a meeting."

"That over," said the Bey, "and I turn my back upon Hungary."

"It were not unwise, methinks," said the Walachian, sadly. "I shall regret thine absence, my lord Ali, but it must come to this, and I will not counsel thee against thy welfare. The chief of those strangers is the legate of the Pope, a lordly and imperious prelate, who rates his red hat, I doubt not, higher than a king's crown. To guess from his demeanor, he deems himself already the head of our councils, turning our sovereign and nobles with his finger, and holding in his right hand the destinies of Hungary. Nay, as if this were not enough, he has buckled armor over rochet, and will strike a good blow if there be need."

"Is he of such weight? Give you to your priests such authority?"

"But little in our temporal concerns, yet in religion all, and this leaves them scope enough. He comes clothed with the power of the head of our church, the power to bind or loose, both on earth and in heaven. I bode no good to Hungary from his presence. I have been warned, in truth, strangely warned, that he will seek to relight the flames of war which have just been smothered."

"By Allah, that he cannot do!" cried the Moslem, warmly. "That surely will your good king and nobles never suffer. Is their oath nought to them?"

"Has he not the power to absolve them of it?" said the Walachian.

"And besides this, not a few among us hold that no faith is to be kept with the infidel."

"A shrewd doctrine! But your king, your brave knights will think upon their honor. They will not make themselves a reproach and scoff before the nations."

"God grant it!" said the Walachian. "And in truth, I think not that they will be easily led to this infamy. Yet I fear the power of yonder prelate."

"All rests with the monarch," answered the Bey. "It is he who holds the sceptre, and he must render an account to Allah for the use which he has made of his authority. Some of our own Mollahs hold the same dogma, but when has the sultan listened? when has the just Morad swerved from his faith? And in this is he a better Moslem than they, and follows more closely the dictates of Islamism? For what says the Koran: 'As for the infidels, perform the covenant which ye shall have made with them, until their time shall be elapsed, for God loveth those who fear him'?"

"That is truth, though the devil himself had uttered it," said the Walachian, warmly.

The brow of the Moslem reddened, and for a moment he was silent, but after a short pause, he said, "Are there not in thine own Scriptures passages of a like import?"

"Oh, many," said the knight, after a slight hesitation, "and some in which that lesson is doubtless still more clearly and forcibly inculcated."

"Wilt thou not rehearse them, that I may compare and judge if they excel those of ours?"

"Dost thou ask that of me?" said the knight. "Hast thou been so long with us and knowest not that those books are sealed to us of the laity; that we leave these matters to our priests, as of too grave import for those whose business it is to wield sword and lance?"

"I wonder the less, then, that ye are at times led astray from the truth; that ye scruple not even at a breach of faith, since ye look more for the sanction of your churchmen than the guidance and authority of your holy writings. Ye have a surety in your hearts for the latter that they do not lie, but where is your surety for the priests. Blessed be Allah, it is not so with the followers of the Prophet! The book which he hath given us is a law to all true believers. By its light the sultan rules and deals out justice and mercy to his people. Our poets draw their inspiration from its pages, and from its precepts our Oulemas have framed the laws which govern us. Scarcely wilt thou find a Moslem, who is not familiar with its lines: many write it out with their own hands, deeming it a meritorious action to multiply the book which our Prophet delivered to us from heaven. Yet ye have the weight of the multitude upon your side," he continued, in a lighter tone. "There have been few religions, from the Egyptians of old down to our Eastern and Western neighbors, that have not kept their sacred writings secret from the people."

"Beshrew thy wit," replied the Walachian. "At any other time it would



call a frown upon my brow, to hear thee mention our holy faith in the same breath with the dark creeds of India and Egypt. There are mysteries in religion too high for an unlettered soldier to understand, and these I leave with the priests. Yet of some things I can judge. If a good father tells me that Joshua or David set his followers in array after this or that fashion, I listen, but give no heed to him; or if he prove to me clear as the light of day, that the same good leaders slaughtered their captives and broke faith with their enemies, this moves me not to follow their example. Here the honor of a knight is my guide. But there are some more easily led, aye, and some who would gladly find a pretext for a breach of faith which might bring them profit. But look; yonder comes the cardinal with his train."

The mist had by this time somewhat risen. The city opposite was visible, and above it along the banks of the river, the band of strangers was seen moving cheerily, as if well refreshed by the hospitality of the old Baron Von Arnheim. "They ride proudly, as if they bore with them the fate of a nation," said the Moslem.

"Aye, by heaven! and who can say that they do not?" replied his companion. "A feeling allied to fear comes upon me. Our young king has tasted glory—will he be content? will he not lend a ready ear to him who will proffer him a deeper draught of the intoxicating cup? But let the end be what it will, do thou leave this land. Ere thou shalt have returned to Adrianople, thy master may have need of thee."

"I cannot think it," said the Bey. "I will remain until yon knight has his plume, or leaves it with me as the trophy of my sword."

"Nay, let the quarrel pass. Take the feather with thee to Adrianople, and should this unhappy war break forth again, thou canst wear it in the battle, and make good thy right in some hard-fought field between our powers. Take down the feather; it is too slight a matter that thou shouldst delay for it, and hazard, perhaps, thine own safety."

"Slight! sayest thou? By Allah, my blood tingles in my veins when I think upon his presumption. I would give my best steed to meet him alone and armed upon the plain. It shall not down—he shall see it, and see me near it. I have proffered him the meeting, and I will not fly from my word."

"As thou wilt," replied the Walachian; "but they are here. The cardinal rides haughtily, and the face of the young knight is clear and bold. By heaven, his cheek flushes; he has caught sight of thy trophy—but the prelate restrains him." The Moslem seemed to notice nothing of this. He remained seated upon the carpet in his accustomed posture, and looked on with a grave and immoveable countenance while the train rode by.

The salutation of the cardinal he did not notice, except by bending his head slightly, and raising his right hand to his breast. The Walachian, however, returned it courteously. As he raised his head again, his eyes encountered those of the Franciscan monk, his companion of the preceding evening. He started, uttered an exclamation of surprise, and then stood watching the band

in silence, as it passed deeper and deeper into the encampment, until it halted near the royal pavilion. This seemed to put an end to his revery. "Mischief rides with them," he exclaimed. "Farewell, Ali Pacha. I will to Huniades and get his thoughts upon this matter." With these words he returned to his tent, summoned his steed, and in a few moments was spurring across the plain.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### RETROSPECT.

At the time of which we write, nearly a century and a half had passed away since the Greek empire was first invaded by Othman, the founder of the dynasty which still bears his name. The former chiefs of that hitherto obscure family had been shepherd soldiers in the service of the sultan of Iconium. Their tents were pitched near the southern banks of the Oxus, and the historian pauses to remark that "the same spot has produced the first authors of the Parthian and Turkish empires." The establishment of the latter is dated from the conquest of Brousa, which was taken during the lifetime of Othman, by his son Orchan. A rapid glance at the most prominent and important events, which from this period until the reign of Amurath, or Morad 2d, varied the history and influenced the character and fortunes of the Ottoman race, will perhaps refresh the memory of the reader, and enable him to follow with more clearness and interest the course of the present narrative.

After the conquest of Brousa, various changes were introduced into the military system of these warlike Turkomans, which contributed in no small degree to their future successes. Hitherto their chief strength lay in their cavalry, which, wild and independent as it was, possessed a skill in horsemanship and a headlong bravery, which rendered its first onset almost irresistible. Upon their infantry, however, little reliance could be placed. It was insubordinate and ill-disciplined, faults which in this arm of warfare, strike at once at its efficiency, and cannot be made good by the most desperate valor. To replace the yahas [infantry] to whom he had given lands, converting them into a sort of feudal soldiery, Orchan levied a new corps, which under the name of janissaries, became so celebrated in the history of his successors, proving oftentimes the firmest defence of the kingdom, and often the terror of its own masters. In addition to this, military engines were framed, and henceforth castles and fortified towns could offer but a feeble resistance to their arms. The booty from the wealthy cities of Asia Minor,

and the ransom of captives, enriched the conquerors, while their temperance discipline and martial enthusiasm preserved them from excesses and debasement.

The marriage of Orchan with Theodora, daughter of John Cantacuzene, who was in arms against Anne of Savoy, the widow of the Greek emperor Andronicus, gave the Turkish prince a pretext for sending his forces into Europe. His son Soliman crossed the Hellespont at the head of 10,000 horse, and gained from the fears of the Empress a treaty, which placed Cantacuzene upon the throne, equal in authority with her son, the lawful heir. The accidental death of Soliman, his favorite son, overpowered the now aged Orchan, and upon his death the sceptre passed into the hands of his second son, Morad, the first of the name. To this monarch the Ottoman kingdom was indebted for some of its most important conquests. He subdued all Rumania or ancient Thrace, destroyed the power of many warlike northern tribes, whose incursions neither the strength nor the majesty of the eastern empire had been able to repel, and fixed the seat of his European possessions at Adrianople. The new infantry, the creation of his father Orchan, he augmented to tenfold its former numbers; and as his care in stamping this body with a peculiar character was attended by some remarkable circumstances, he is mentioned by most European historians as its founder. By an imperial edict, the fifth part of the Christian captives, and of these the most robust and beautiful, were enrolled in its ranks; and that the sanction of religious ceremony should not be wanting to so important an institution, the new levies were sent to a renowned dervish, that he might pray for their success, give them a banner, and appoint to them a name. Placing the sleeve of his gown upon the head of one of their number, he said: "Let them be called Yenghi Cheri (new soldiers). Let their countenance be ever bright, their hands victorious, and their swords keen. Let their spears always hang over the heads of their enemies, and wherever they go, may they return with a bright face (with praise)." Their number, which has varied under different sovereigns, is usually about 40,000, and is filled up by Christian captives, who have been educated from early youth to know no father but the sultan, no will but his, and to see in him the source, from which alone honor and wealth can flow to them.

The successor of Amurath was his son, the fiery Bajazet, surnamed Ilderim, (the lightning,) from the rapidity of his motions, and the energy with which he pursued those plans of conquest to which his insatiable ambition prompted him. The speed of the Tartars when compared with his, is called the creeping of the snail. He crossed alternately from Asia into Europe, astonishing his subjects and his enemies by the suddenness of his marches, the secrecy and celerity of which left rumor far behind. In the planning of his most important designs, he took counsel only from his own wisdom and courage; and until an enterprise of difficulty and danger was undertaken, his nearest officers were ignorant that it was meditated. The appellation of Emir, which

and hitherto been borne by his predecessors, was a name too humble for a prince of his abilities and ambition. It was laid aside by Bajazet, who received the title of sultan from the feeble caliphs of the house of Abbas.

By the arms of this prince the Ottoman territories were extended on every side. Yet his most important successes were against the Hungarians. In the year 1394, with 60,000 of his invincible followers, he defeated an army of 100,000 Christians under Sigismund, King of Hungary, who had invested Nicopolis with his forces. With these was the flower of the French and Burgundian chivalry. Among the captives of the haughty Moslem were a future duke of Burgundy, John, surnamed the fearless, the marechal, the constable of France, and the celebrated Sire de Coucy—the two latter of whom died in prison at Brousa. The rest were ransomed by costly treasures and the most curious productions of art with which the manufactories of France and Italy could tempt the cupidity and taste of the conqueror. From the obligation which bound them never to bear arms against him, they were freed by Bajazet himself, who must have despised the power of his captives, or sympathized in their misfortunes.

Surrounded almost on every side by the territories of the sultan, Constantinople seemed rapidly approaching its fall. It was spared, however, upon the most humiliating conditions—conditions of disgraceful retribution upon the descendants of the old conquerors and taxmasters of the world.—An annual tribute was imposed of ten thousand Turkish rups or Venetian golden crowns: a mosque and a hall of judgment were erected in the imperial city, and the religion of Mahomet tolerated by law under the eyes of the second dignitary of the Christian church. A *cadi* was appointed within the dominions of the Cæsar to decide all causes of dispute between the Mahometan inhabitants, while those which arose between the votaries of opposite creeds were submitted to the decision of the Patriarch. This treaty was soon violated by the sultan, the city invested, and the metropolis of the Eastern church and empire must have fallen an easy prey, when Bajazet was called to defend his Asiatic possessions against the assaults of the invincible Timour. In a sanguinary battle under the walls of Angora, in which, if annalists are to be credited, four hundred thousand Ottomans encountered twice that number of Moguls, the power of the sultan was crushed, and he himself taken prisoner. His dominions beyond the Hellespont submitted to the conqueror, and Europe breathed freely for a time, while Havoc glutted his appetite upon his favorite fields of Asia Minor. The confinement of the captive sultan in an iron cage is discredited by the critical accuracy of modern historians. He was treated, however, with considerable severity by his haughty subduer, and remained in imprisonment until death took him from his power. Among the many indignities which he suffered, one is worthy of mention, from its supposed influence upon the practice of his descendants. While feasting at the table of Timour, Bajazet observed his own wives serving unveiled among the slaves of the household. The succeeding sultans of his family have,

with rare exceptions, abstained from legitimate nuptials, lest the fortune of war might expose them to a similar insult.

But notwithstanding the success of Timour against the Ottoman, his subjects made no permanent establishment in Asia Minor. The storm of conquest rolled toward the East, and when the master spirit was no more which had concentrated and directed its terrors, it became scattered to the winds. It was not thus with the Turkish power. The fortune of the Moguls owed its origin to the genius of a single man, but the foundations of the Ottoman empire were laid deep in the wise institutions of an able race of sovereigns. The timidity and supineness of the Greeks, prevented them from seizing the opportunity now offered of expelling the Moslem from Europe, and after a few years their old enemy arose from his prostration, again to threaten, and finally subdue their proud city. After the defeat of Bajazet, his territories were seized by his contending sons, who quarrelled for the succession. Of these Mahomet alone is numbered among the Turkish sultans. Moustapha, the eldest, fell as was supposed at the battle of Angora, but as the circumstances of his death were unknown, and as his body was not found upon the field, various impostors, who assumed his name, troubled in succeeding years the tranquillity of the state. Soliman, the second son, fell by the hand of Moussa ; and if the success of Mahomet was stained by the blood of the latter, the deed was softened by the plea of revenge for the death of a brother. After a reign of eight years, in which he collected and consolidated the scattered remnants of his father's power, the angel of death summoned Mahomet from the throne. He left the kingdom to his son Morad.

Though he ascended the throne at the early age of eighteen, yet Morad soon gave proof that he was worthy to wield the sceptre of his father. The Greek Emperor had early shown himself his enemy, and incurred his bitter hatred for having espoused the cause of an impostor, Moustapha, who gave himself out to be the son of Bajazet. This rebellion with difficulty quelled, Morad granted peace to the Emperor upon the payment of an annual tribute and the surrender of all the cities and strong holds upon the Euxine. The territories of the Despot of Servia, who had presumptuously tempted his anger, were next invaded, and Hungary lay open to the Moslem arms. Constantinople seemed now to exist only from the contemptuous forbearance of the sultan. The terms upon which peace had been obtained, but rendered its fall more certain ; a temporary tranquillity was purchased, but it was by parting with its means of defence, and by strengthening the hands of its oppressors. From the degradation into which centuries of luxury and inactivity had thrown the Greeks of this age, it is probable that no measures, however bold or politic, would have enabled them long to resist the assaults of their restless and energetic foemen.

Yet to the descendants of the Cæsars, a noble choice lay open, to bid defiance to the invaders, to march at the head of his mercenaries, and drive them beyond the sea, though he should drench the soil of his kingdom with his

blood ; or if the attempt were hopeless, to await their coming on his throne, and like the conscript fathers of old, look death in the face firm and immovable, and suffer it unstained by degradation. Perhaps even at the last, another Camillus had arisen to beat back the insulting enemy, and cleanse the sacred soil from the footsteps of the barbarians. But Manuel was incapable of any noble or brave resolve, and Morad, with the courage of Brennus had more than his patience and policy, and commanded ampler resources. The only hope of the Greeks lay in succors from the west. To obtain these, however, they must make concessions revolting to their pride, and repugnant to their consciences. For centuries, a watchful jealousy had existed between the sees of Rome and Constantinople. The bishop of the new metropolis of the empire disdained a second place in the Hierarchy, and the successor of St. Peter boldly advanced his claim to the first. Besides this, doctrines of high import had been defined with theological accuracy, and the nicest shades of belief were condemned and advocated by the sectaries of a divided church, with characteristic enthusiasm and animosity. These differences had ripened at last into open hostility. The thunders of excommunication had rolled from the Vatican, and the walls of the temple were rent by a schism which, with rare intervals of apparent reunion, has since continued to separate the Greek and Latin churches. But the pride of the Greeks had been subdued by centuries of degradation, and their present and temporal danger outweighed their more remote and spiritual interests. A deputation of their bishops, headed by the aged patriarch, crossed the sea to confer with their western brethren, nor did the Emperor himself blush to appear in Italy in the discordant characters of a suppliant, and a sovereign.

At the councils of Ferrara and Florence, a seeming but delusive union was established between the churches. The supremacy of the pope, the nature of the purgatory, the use of unleavened bread in the celebration of the Eucharist, the double procession of the Holy Spirit, were, after a severe and protracted discussion, subscribed by the eastern bishops, and Eugenius, whom the council of Basil, on the same year, and almost on the same day, had deposed from the holy see, was acknowledged at Florence as head of the universal church. In return for these concessions, the influence of the pontiff was to be strongly exerted in behalf of their country. A religious crusade was to be preached, and the Christian powers exhorted to unite in the common cause and resist the advances of the Ottoman. But the enthusiasm which had prompted and carried on the holy wars, had long since become languid. Even when the Infidel was rearing the pillars of his creed upon European soil, and threatening the political as well as the religious institutions of the west, it was no easy task to array armed Christendom against him. The princes were cold and unwilling, private interests and quarrels left no room to considerations for the general welfare. The different powers of Europe were at war with each other, or if at peace, were recovering from the weakness consequent upon former feuds. "Yet the designs of the Roman pontiff,"

says the historian, "and the eloquence of his legate were promoted by the circumstances of the times, by the union of the two crowns, (Hungary, and Poland,) on the head of Ladislaus, a young and ambitious soldier, by the valor of a hero whose name (the name of John Huniades) was already popular among the Christians, and formidable to the Turks. An endless treasure of pardons and indulgences was scattered by the legate, many private warriors of France and Germany were enlisted under the holy banner, and the crusade derived some strength, or at least some reputation from new allies, both in Europe and Asia." Venice, Genoa, and Flanders, sent their fleets to the Hellespont; the Greek Emperor engaged to guard the Bosphorus, and the Pacha of Caramania, an obstinate rebel, who had twice experienced the clemency of the sultan, promised a powerful diversion in the heart of Asia Minor.

Aroused by the danger to which his dominions were exposed, and strengthened by many western auxiliaries, Ladislaus led a large army into Servia to assist the despot George. After a successful campaign in which he had advanced as far as Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, taken many towns, and gained two signal victories over the Ottoman, his progress was arrested by the approach of winter, and he returned in triumph to Buda. Moved by these reverses, Amurath seemed desirous of peace. A treaty was negotiated, and about the middle of June 1444, a truce for ten years was concluded between the two powers, at the Diet of Segedin. By this treaty, Amurath gave up his meditated vengeance against the treacherous despot, restored to him his dominions, ransomed all the Turkish prisoners, and engaged no longer to molest the Hungarian frontier. The Hungarians on the other hand were to consider the Danube as the boundary of their kingdom, and until the time of the truce had expired, to lead no hostile army beyond this limit. This treaty was confirmed by the most binding oaths. The king of Hungary, with his hand upon the gospel, swore by the body of Christ to observe its conditions, and with equal solemnity Amurath appealed to the Koran, and to his prophet.

Such was the condition of the Hungarian kingdom, when Juliani arrived at Buda, accompanied by Di Rimini at the head of the numerous and gallant band which has been described. The news of the truce was like a thunder-stroke to the legate. It seemed to destroy at once all the fair prospects of his ambition, prospects which he had long nourished, carefully ripened, and from the fruit of which he thought to reap a goodly harvest of fame and authority. The names of Peter the hermit, of St. Bernard, still blazed high upon the scroll of fame, and he had hoped at least to equal their renown. Nay, he desired a glory beyond this, a glory which is found only in the midst of danger. Warlike and imperious in character, he would try the fortune of the field, as well as that of the stormy debate and council, and sword in hand advance the cause of that church, with which his own interest and honor were so closely connected. These hopes seemed now to disappear, for the completion of which he had so long labored. In addition to this, his

pride was deeply wounded. Deeming himself an important member of the league, knowing that as legate of the pope, he, by his eloquence and authority, had been chiefly instrumental in uniting in one common cause, elements so diverse and incongruous; that by his efforts the Caramanian, the Greek Emperor, and many western knights, had been moved to the enterprise, he could hardly credit that the nobles of Hungary should hold him of such slight value as to take a step so important, without his council or assent. He bore in mind also, that it was not merely the danger with which the Hungarians were threatened, that gave the impulse to the crusade, yet they alone had reaped advantage from it, and had left their eastern allies, whose aid they had invoked, to bear the vengeance of the sultan alone. He could not conceal from himself, however, that as yet those allies had taken no part in the war, and that past experience had shown that they could not be trusted. The Caramanian was treacherous, the Greek weak and vacillating. Both would in all likelihood have shrunk from their promises at the approach of danger, and neither could deserve that fidelity which each in a similar case would have refused. Yet the crusade concerned the interests, not of one nation alone, but of all Europe. Its aim was to drive the Moslem beyond the sea, to restore to the eastern empire its ravished possessions, and erect it into a bulwark of Christendom. Unless this was accomplished, little had been gained. The forces of the Infidel were well disciplined, perpetually armed, and moved by a single hand; after the complicated and unwieldy power of the crusade should be dissolved, Amurath might once more commence his aggressions, while only after much delay, could Europe unite in a second effort to repel him. Even if the sultan should prove his acknowledged integrity, and respect the treaty to which he had sworn, yet when the ten years should have passed away, the same contest must be renewed, the same exertions to oppose his ambition, and at a time perhaps, and under circumstances less favorable to the endeavor. Such were the views of Juliani, such the views with which he sought to inspire the king and nobles of Hungary, and his efforts were not without grave effects upon the future history of that nation.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CARDINAL.

On the following day the cardinal of St. Angelo sat alone in his tent. It was near sunset. The couch upon which he rested was soft and yielding; his cuirass was thrown aside, and the heavings of his bosom had free play



beneath the covering of a silken robe. All was quiet ; not a sound was heard to disturb him, except when the young page, who stood near the door of the tent, left his place to obey some command of his master. The day had been to him one of busy exertion, yet it did not seem as if he sought repose, although everything around him appeared suited to invite it. On the contrary, his restless motions, his lowering and overshadowed brow, an occasional exclamation and hurried gesture, told that he was busied within himself, involved in careful thought perhaps, or a prey to emotion. Presently his meditations found their way to his lips. "They will not be moved then," he muttered in an under tone, rising as he spoke, and pacing the narrow enclosure of his pavilion, "neither Huniades nor the king. May the curses of heaven light upon them. The stubbornness of the German is a ready proverb with us in Italy, and this mule of Hungary holds in his veins something of the same blood. Yet he is young and ardent. My words, I doubt not, had weight with him, but he would not that it should appear so, while Huniades stood beside him, mouthing widely of his oath and knightly honor. Heaven and earth ! had I known that this was in store for me, would I have borne so gaily the toils of yonder journey ? They shall yet listen to me, or may the sabre of the Infidel sweep them from the earth."

He was interrupted in his soliloquy by the gallop of a steed which approached and seemed to stop before the tent. "See who is without, Florian," he said, turning to the boy, and then threw himself listlessly upon the couch. "If it be Ulric of Cillia, admit him," he added, recalling him. "To others, say I am weary, sick, disquieted, anything, but bid them not enter." In a moment the page returned bearing a small packet carefully enveloped and sealed, which he delivered to the cardinal.

"From whom, Florian ?" he asked, as he took the letter from the hands of the boy.

"It was brought by a horseman, my lord," was the reply. "He was armed at all points, and said that he had taken much pains, and ridden far to place it in thy hands."

"Fill yonder goblet, and wait without."

"With the wine of Italy, my lord, or that of this land ?"

"Fill me of the wine of Greece, and begone." The page retired after he had performed the bidding of his master, and the latter having first moistened his lips from the cup which stood before him, proceeded to scan the seal and superscription of the mission. "To Juliani Cæsarini, Cardinal of St. Angelo, and the device a half moon sinking in the sea." "A good omen !" he exclaimed, as he broke the seal of the envelope. "'Tis from beyond the Euxine. Ha ! what mean these words ? Heaven's grace ! can this be true ? Amurath no longer on the throne ! What ho, boy ! Florian ! bring lights. Wouldst leave me with the last rays of the setting sun to read lines like these ? Holy St. Mary, thou art yet mindful of thy servant," he continued, rising and resuming his hurried walk. "If true, it comes in a good hour :

this shall give weight to my admonitions. Before the assembled barons,"—suddenly he stood still, his eye brightened, a triumphant smile played about his lips, and he exclaimed, "That thought is from heaven: A council! a council! aye, by the virgin, that must needs help. But stay, let me read once again. I am like a fond girl who breaks the seal of her lover, and finds within more perhaps, much more than is written." He turned to the lights which the page had placed upon the table, and taking a more copious draught of the rich juice which sparkled in the goblet, composed himself to read. At this moment, the curtain which closed the entrance of the pavilion was drawn aside, and Florian reappeared, ushering in a stranger. The new comer was a man somewhat advanced beyond the prime of life, of about fifty years, perhaps, or even more; for though his hair was scarcely tinged with grey, yet it was of a light flaxen color, which suffers this change much less early than that of a darker hue. His eyes were blue, but small, and almost hid beneath his prominent brows. His features might be called manly and bold, but there was something repulsive and cold in their expression. He was of the middle height, of a frame strong and robust, but wanting somewhat in ease and gracefulness of motion, so that although richly dressed, he appeared to disadvantage, when compared with the proud and courtly prelate in whose presence he stood. Juliani folded hastily the letter which he held in his hand, placed it in his bosom, and advanced to welcome his guest. "Thou art welcome, my lord earl," he said. "I have waited this hour for thy coming. The wine I told thee of, sparkles idly on the table."

"Thanks, thanks, holy cardinal," responded the earl, taking the goblet which the page proffered him, and draining it almost to the bottom. "May the fiend catch—but pardon, holy father. I would say simply that in the pleasure of the cup, ye of France and Italy excel. It hath the true savor, and smacks of the warm sun of the Mediterranean. 'Tis of French vintage, most like?"

"I rejoice that thou dost find it to thy taste," said Juliani. "Yet 'tis a richer juice than ripens beyond the Alps. 'Tis a Greek wine, of the vintage of Cyprus. What sayst thou, noble earl, were it fitting that these vines should be reaped by the sabre of the Moslem!"

"What matters it?" rejoined his companion, laughing. "It will come to us a cheaper bargain. The benighted dogs know not the value of this blessing. But how dost thou find thy quarters, my lord cardinal? They seem doubtless a poor exchange for thy gay palace and luxurious halls of the papal city."

"Of this I think not," replied Juliani, sadly. "I were unworthy of the cross I wear, did I sigh for earthly comforts when armed in the service of my master. This canopy shelters me from the sun, and from the rain, and upon yonder couch a weary head may sleep soundly, as under hangings of purple. Your good king's hospitality had outrun my desires, found I in more weighty matters such welcome as I looked for."

"What meanst thou, holy father? asked his companion in surprise. "Speak freely; I have the king's command to minister to all thy wishes."

"I slept at ease in Italy," continued the cardinal, more impressively, laying his hand confidently upon the shoulder of the earl, "but the Infidel was in the land of my brethren, and I awoke and put on my armor. I left those halls thou dost speak of, for the hard saddle and rude tent, and journeyed hither into Hungary. Neither did the toils of the way disturb me, or move me in any manner from my purpose, for a bright vision smoothed the path and led me joyfully onward."

"Well, and this dream, this vision?" said the earl, seeing that Juliani did not immediately proceed.

"I had heard of Hungary, and her brave king, of her stout hearts and good lances, and I dreamed that the hour of the Infidel had come. I dreamed of the triumph of the cross, of the peace of Christendom, and the final downfall of the Moslem."

"Ha! it is this truce, then, that weighs thus heavily upon thee."

"And would to God it so weighed upon every knight in this host," exclaimed Juliani, warmly. "Who, that has the welfare of Christendom at heart, does not grieve over this unrighteous treaty! Holy virgin, lay it not to my charge, visit not this sin upon the head of thine unworthy servant."

"We have all, all of us, the welfare of Christendom at heart," rejoined the earl, "but was it strange that we should think somewhat upon our country? The truce was a good truce, so far as profit and advantage could make it good. As for the sin, the most of us will bear it lightly, or hold it as but part of yon dream thou hast rehearsed to me. But I see how it is with thee. Ye had beaten your ploughshares into swords, and care not so soon to lay aside your armor. Ye would have been greeted in the open field with the sound of trumpet and the shaking of lances. The cardinal of St. Peter disdains our peaceful welcome."

"Oh, were it a true peace!" exclaimed the legate. "But how can that be true which rests upon the word of a Moslem? Let but these forces be disbanded, and Amurath will return with redoubled fury to his work of conquest,—and can Hungary alone withstand his power? It will be then too late, alas, to stretch out your hands for succors. Once deceived, the princes of the West will not again draw sword in your behalf."

"But what choice had we, for it must come to this. What surety have we in truth at any time for peace, but the promises and oaths of our enemy?"

"Your arms. Drive him beyond the sea. Give to the Greek again his ravished possessions, and make his land the bulwark of your own."

"I confess," replied the earl, thoughtfully, "that there is much reason in thy words. But thou seest it is now too late. Our faith is pledged, and to break it would bring us small honor."

"Deem ye so lightly of faithlessness to your allies, and yet cling thus closely to a bargain made with the enemies of your religion?"

"Thou dost mean the Greek Emperor and the Caramanian. Hopeful allies are they, forsooth. The latter is treacherous and subtle, and for the Greek—whoever heard the sound of his trumpet when any brave enterprise was in hand? By mine honor, I would as soon band myself with the Ottoman, and feel surer of faith at his hands than at theirs. I care not what may befall them."

"God's will be done!" said the prelate, veiling his face with his hands. "Yet I might have looked for it," he added, after a short silence. "The meeting with yonder Moslem was a true omen of the welcome I have found in Hungary. Upon the threshold of the land I meet the Infidel riding in his pride, with no submission, no whit of deference in his demeanor, but haughtily, as if he were already lord and master, and owner of the soil."

"By St. Stephen, he holds his head high enough," replied the earl. "For any deference or submission thou must look elsewhere than to yonder Bey. But how was it, my lord cardinal? If I have heard rightly, there was tilting upon the heath that night, and one of the best lances in thy train lost a plume in the encounter."

"It was so," answered the prelate, "but with small loss of honor to the good knight who wore it. His steed was jaded with the journey, while that of the Infidel was fresh, and is, beside, fleet as the wind. It was a mischance that might befall the best. And now, forsooth, he hangs the feather at his tent door, parades it in the eyes of the camp as the trophy of his arm, holds out, by my faith, defiance to a Christian knight, as if he also wore belt and spurs, and were not, as he is, a hound of Islam."

"He has been humored in it since his sojourn in the camp, and by none more than yonder knight, who, it is said, made him prisoner," answered the earl, with a tone of bitterness which did not escape the notice of his companion.

"They are well matched in presumption, I doubt not," said the legate. "I have already had a taste of his boldness. But who, and what is he?"

"A stranger, my lord," replied the earl, after some hesitation, "of whom more is heard than is rightly known. He is, by birth, a Walachian, and owes his fortune to the friendship of Huniades."

"Has he wealth or rank?"

"A poor knight's spurs and a meagre estate in some eastern province, I know not rightly where. As he can bring a thousand wild riders into the field, he cuts me his pennon square, and terms himself, forsooth, knight banneret."

"He is a good knight, I doubt not?" said the legate, in a tone of inquiry.

"Aye, he is brave enough," answered the earl. "I will not belie him, though I bear him no good will. He is one who will ride against a row of spears without taking count of their number, or looking to see if good and trusty friends are at his shoulder. But he is proud and presumptuous withal, and in this, scarce a whit behind his master. By St. George of Cappadocia,

they hold their heads as high as if there were no valor or merit but what might be found in their harness."

"Report calls him, save Huniades, the best lance in the host."

"The fiend catch my soul!" exclaimed the earl, scowling darkly, "that were a pretty tale. By this light, the best lances of Hungary ride with the Earl of Cillia. There are scores in my train before whom he would lose both stirrup and saddle."

"Yet he soars boldly," replied Juliani, observing him still more closely. "I marked him at the table of Von Arnheim, and methought, as he looked upon the fair Bertha, who sat beside him, his glance was not altogether that of a nameless knight, a poor adventurer."

"Aye, he soars boldly, but has no wing for the height he aims at. But what is this to us, holy father! Let us speak of other matters."

"It is plain, my lord, thou dost bear this knight no good will. I, also, have endured his presumption, have stood by and heard him bid defiance to the gentlemen of my train, and for peace sake must bear it quietly, nay, play the mediator between them. For mine own private injuries, I have no memory, but the whole church, our holy high priest in God, have suffered insult in my unworthy person, and the offender must not go unpunished."

"But how? tell me the way, the means, to crush this upstart?" exclaimed the other, eagerly.

"Nay, I would further no worldly revenge, if thou hast such passion to gratify," continued the prelate; "but could I convince thee, noble earl, of the sin and baseness of this treaty with the Infidel, thou wouldst find it a duty to oppose, with all thy power, those who uphold it, and this knight among the rest."

"I am impressed therewith ere thou hast spoken," said the earl with a grim smile. "Thou dost possess a moving eloquence, my lord cardinal, and hast proved it clear as the light of day, beyond all cavil, with those few words. Show me now as plainly how to deal with this—with all, indeed, who advocate this unhallowed truce."

"Use all thy power to dissolve it. Let this bold Infidel be imprisoned to remain a hostage for the safety of our eastern allies. Let him answer for it with his life, should his vindictive master turn his fury against those whom we have abandoned to his power. Seest thou not? Will yonder knight endure this humbly? Will he not demand his captive, with high words, perhaps? or more, even with deeds, with open defiance and contumacy, if he be proud as thou hast painted him. Seest thou not here the first weaving of the web which may enfold him in ruin? Bring but the matter to this, and trust to time and my care for the rest."

"It is right skilfully planned, my lord," replied the earl, "but I think not that our king and nobles will be led thus far. They will hardly, for all thou or I can say, prove themselves forsworn."

"What pratest thou of being forsworn?" cried the cardinal, quickly.

"Can I not annul their oath? As legate of the pope, do I not hold in my hands the power to absolve them?"

"The keys of heaven will doubtless turn at thy bidding, holy father; but our Hungarians are too earthly-minded. They will think somewhat of their honor among men, their knightly fame."

"The ornament of a brave knight is fidelity; of a Christian, zeal for the cross," rejoined the prelate. "I know the value of an oath to an enemy, but it is more binding than one given to a friend and ally, and will its infringement bring more infamy?"

"What care they for such allies as the Greek, or the Pacha of Caramania, who talk loudly while war is at a distance, but when it comes, shrink behind their walls, and fold their hands idly to sleep?"

"Here is that will prove that the allies ye despise are awake and busy," said the legate, drawing the letter from his bosom and reaching it to the earl. "Read there, my lord, and learn to prize their fidelity more highly."

The earl took the letter and read aloud as follows:—"Joseph of Caramania, to the Cardinal of St. Angelo, sends greeting. Thou wilt receive this by a sure messenger. The Greek Emperor is in arms, and the fleets of the west guard the Hellespont. My troops are in the field. Amurath has abdicated the throne, and the sceptre is wielded by his son Mahomet, a young plant which the slightest wind may easily uproot. Iscander Bey has escaped from his tyrant and retired into Albania, with his followers, to defend his heritage. The time favors, let good council march hand in hand with speed."

"'Fore heaven! these be wild news," exclaimed the earl, when he had ended. "Amurath no longer on the throne! The sceptre held by the boy Mahomet! Well said, bold Caramanian! a young plant which the slightest wind may uproot."

"Let it blow to a storm," exclaimed the legate, "a whirlwind that shall sweep the Ottoman from the face of the earth."

"The Greek, too, awake, and the Pacha in the field. The fiend catch my soul, but this wears a face. Thou mayst count upon my aid to the utmost."

"Thanks, noble earl, I had looked for no less from thee."

"I will straightway to the king, and open to him my thoughts upon this matter of the truce."

"Nay, thou must proceed warily, most noble earl. It were not well to urge him in round terms to annul the treaty. Tell him that many lords among us see unwillingly the destruction of our allies, and the rise of the Turk upon their ruins. Speak of tidings newly received, of their activity, their faithfulness to the good cause, and the peril in which their own fidelity hath placed them. Yet say nought of this letter from the Caramanian. I will use it in good time. Move him to assemble his barons, that they may deliberate on the welfare and honor of the kingdom. Bring it once to this, and leave the rest in my hands."

"Well said, and forget not thy purpose concerning the Walachian," said the earl, hesitating, ere he departed.

"Fear me not. He shall not go unpunished," was the reply.

"Farewell, then, my lord cardinal. Before morning many of the Chiefs will have a whisper from me in the ear. By St. Stephen, since the business is in hand, it may as well be speedily done."

"Aye, speedily and warily—that is the word—farewell! . . . Let but the council meet and the game is mine," exclaimed the legate, when the earl had left him. "I have learned ere this how crowds are to be led—headlong, unthinking—often by a word, a breath. Give them but the impulse, and it swells like a vast wave before the wind. Scatter the spark among them, and fire upon an autumn heath rages not more wildly. God prosper us. Upon this night's council hangs the weal or woe of Christendom."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE COUNCIL.

THE plans of the Cardinal Juliani were not without effect. Three days only had passed since the preceding interview, when the deep-toned bell of the cathedral tolled out its summons to the council. It was near the hour of noon. The day was clear and unclouded, and the streets of Buda were thronged with citizens in gayest attire, who pressed their way towards the place of meeting to watch the gathering of the assembly, and to listen to the first tidings of the deliberations which touched the welfare of Hungary so nearly. The place appointed for this grave assembly, was the Church of the Ascension of the Virgins.

Upon a temporary throne erected within this vast edifice, and surrounded by a few of his chief nobles, sat Ladislaus, king of Poland and Hungary. He was in the bloom of youth, his age being about twenty-three years, and in appearance every way noble and prepossessing. Before him, upon a crimson covered cushion, lay his sceptre and the crown of St. Stephen, a gift from the Church to the first Christian monarch of Hungary.

His eye beamed with ardor, as knight after knight, in burnished armor, but unhelmeted, trod heavily down the marble aisle, and when the appearance of some well known warrior called forth a murmur of applause from those present, he seemed to partake in their enthusiasm; his youthful form appeared to dilate, and he looked around him with an air truly king-like. Near him stood John Huniades, Waivode of Transylvania, called from the shining color of his armor, the White Knight. Fame declared him the best

knight of the kingdom, and he was one for whom the age, fertile as it was in warriors, could scarcely find a peer. In person, he was tall and commanding; and it might easily be seen, from his firm and sinewy proportions, that he was endowed with great bodily strength. His features were handsome and manly, and beneath their clear surface, there seemed to lie no boisterous passion, no busy thought, nor anxious policy. His rank as leader of the crusading army, which gave him near approach to the person of the king, had been bestowed upon him for former services. In the war for the Hungarian succession, it was owing chiefly to his valor, that the crown had been placed upon the head of Ladislaus, while a numerous party, headed by Ulric, of Cillia, the most powerful noble in the kingdom, supported the claims of the posthumous son of Albert V. The influence which he possessed over the mind of his sovereign, however, was not owing to this alone. His personal character, which was most open, generous and heroic, was in every respect calculated to charm and attract one so young as Ladislaus, and one whose disposition was of a kindred nature. The emotion of the king, as he looked upon the scene before him, did not escape his eye. After watching him for some time, he bent forward, smiled, and said, in a low tone, "Your majesty seems much moved. I fear me the Cardinal has a won game, before the men are placed upon the board."

"Believe it not, good Huniades. I confess the sight of so many brave warriors makes my blood stir within me. It will move anon more slowly when the clash of armor and the tramp of mailed feet shall give place to more peaceful sounds. But how is it with thee? Thou art not wont to be so cold?"

"I also, oh my liege, know no goodlier sight than the gathering of stout warriors, except an open field with a just quarrel, and in presence of a worthy enemy."

"My thoughts in good sooth turned to past times, when thou didst first teach me to back steed and handle lance."

"It was the beginning of a career of honor, which must suffer no stain," said Huniades, and then added, more earnestly, "Pardon me, my liege, thy kindness has given license to my tongue. Better that those days had never been—better that thou hadst never learned the duties of a knight, if thou shouldst now take a step in the pathway of dishonor. This prelate has the very cunning of the serpent."

"Nay, harp no longer upon that strain. Thou needst not fear me. If my blood runs to-day somewhat quicker than it is wont, what wonder is it when so many bold forms pass before me, when armor rings, and banners rustle around, as if some brave enterprise were meditated? But I shall remember who and what I am. Yonder comes the Walachian, a brave knight in the field, as these eyes ere looked upon."

"Aye, he is brave, and has a loyal heart, and a tongue which will give good council. Such are more needful now than strong hands and good lances."



During this, the young knight, accompanied by a few followers, had approached the throne. He bowed lowly to the king, returned the open smile of Huniades with a frank and cheerful salutation, and then took his seat at a little distance in the body of the church below. In a few moments the tramp of many feet and a hum of voices announced the arrival of some personage of importance. All eyes were fixed upon the inner door of the cathedral as it opened, and the Cardinal entered. Followed by a numerous train of ecclesiastics and warriors, he walked with a firm, grave step down the long aisle. His eyes were bent upon the ground, and he raised them only when he had approached the elevated platform, to bend his head slightly before the king, and to send back to Huniades, what seemed more like a smile of defiance, than a friendly greeting. Nothing could surpass the pomp of his attire, the splendor of his retinue, and the more than regal majesty of his carriage. He was clothed in a velvet robe of the richest Italian fabric, that sparkled with innumerable jewels ; and upon his head he wore the crimson hat, which, as the badge of his ecclesiastical dignity, he raised not even to the salutation of the king. He walked forward like one buried in deep thought : he bestowed no glance upon the many knights who were present, but ascended the steps slowly, and took his place near the king upon his right, apparently unconscious of every outward object. After him came the stalwart form of the Earl of Cillia, who ascended and seated himself near him. When the bell of the cathedral had ceased tolling, perfect silence followed, while the officiating priest recited mass. This ended, the king arose from his seat, looked around upon the assembly, and spoke as follows : " Princes of the kingdom, holy fathers, knights and gentlemen, it is well known to all present that, with the blessing of God upon our arms, we have waged a glorious warfare against the infidel, have defeated him in two bloody fields, and obtained a truce honorable as we believe to ourselves and salutary to Christendom. There be some, however, among us who deem more lightly of the advantage we have gained from the Ottoman ; and it becomes us as brethren, the servants of one common master, to give ear to their council, that we may judge and act without presumption or reproach. Chief among these stands our right trusty friend and holy father in God, the Cardinal of St. Angelo. The words of one so famed for piety and wisdom, would at any time have weight with us, and now much more so, since he comes clothed with the office of Legate of the Pope, who has vouchsafed to send him hither to give weight and sanction to our undertakings. That he may make known to you those things which he holds as good and needful, both to Hungary and Christendom, we have seen fit, after the custom of our kingdom, to summon you to council. Now, therefore, we entreat that, with pure and loyal hearts, ye hear and deliberate upon all matters which he may propound, touching the dignity of our crown, the good of the church, and the welfare of our country, as free gentlemen, and in the fear of God."

A murmur of approbation ran through the cathedral when the king had

ended, and all eyes were turned upon the legate. After a short pause, he arose and addressed the assembly in these words: "King of Hungary and Poland, and ye Christian warriors, who, by your knightly vow, have sworn to defend the faith and succor the oppressed, if aught escape from my lips which shall sound harshly to your ears, bear with me for the love of Christ, and listen and give heed to me. If in my zeal for the welfare of that church, whose sworn soldiers ye are, I speak words which may offend, have patience with me as a brother of the cross, obeying the same leader, and fighting in the same warfare." The brow of the cardinal here became overcast, a shade of grief lay upon his now pallid features, and as he continued, the words broke from his heaving bosom slowly, and as if with pain: "Not many suns have arisen upon the land, since I stood by the side of our holy father Eugenius, when your cries sounded over the mountains, and messenger after messenger came calling upon your western brethren for succor. Nor did you call in vain. We listened to the groanings of Christendom, and, forgetting the pleasures of peace, exchanged the priestly robe for the harness of the warrior. For your sakes we have endured the toils and perils of a tedious journey. We have taken our lives in our hands, and the best blood of Italy stands ready to flow in defence of your country and your religion. But alas! to what purpose have we come? How find we that Hungary, which we fondly viewed as the defence of Christendom, and the scourge of her enemies? Answer, noble knights, yet answer to your own hearts, lest the words, if uttered, should cover you with too deep a shame."

"Thy question is easily answered, my lord cardinal," said Huniades, rising. "Thou dost find Hungary at peace, after a glorious campaign, reposing from the labors of war; thou dost find her enlarged and strengthened in her borders, and reaping the fruits of the brave deeds of her sons. How these words may sound to thy ear, most holy father, I know not, but to us, to those who fought in the fields of Sofia and Istatu, they bring no shame—nay, God wots, rather some store of honor."

"Is it thus ye look upon it?" exclaimed the cardinal, his voice sounding high above the murmurs of applause which followed the words of Huniades. "I must lift then the veil from your dishonor, and point to the dark spot that rests upon your arms. Ye have vanquished your enemies, forsooth, and those enemies have set the bounds to your conquests. Ye have made a truce with the contemners of the Saviour, which leaves them in possession of Christian provinces. Was it for this that couriers were sent to every court in Europe? or was it that this continent might be cleansed from the Infidel, that the ferocious Amurath might be driven beyond the Euxine, that the Emperor of the Greeks should be secure in Constantinople, and that the terror of the false prophet might cease from among the nations of Christendom? Victorious in battle, how have ye fulfilled the trust which Europe has committed to your arms. Heedless of your allies, ye have sought only your own safety; satisfied that for a few short years ye have saved Hungary from the

power of the enemy, ye have abandoned the Greek and the Caramanian, to endure singly the fury of their most cruel enemy. Say I not rightly, then, there is a stain upon your country's honor?—a stain which can be washed away only in the blood of the Moslem!"

The brow of Huniades was red with anger, and his clear blue eye flashed fire for a moment, as he exclaimed, "We are Hungarian barons, gentlemen, and may not rest quietly under the disgrace of our country. If her honor be stained, let not the spot be hidden, but let it appear from the deeds of her children, and not from the words of a stranger newly come among us. Warriors of Hungary, whose arms overthrew the Ottoman! Was it these arms, dishonored though they be, or was it those of Italy and the church? Who fought at Istatu and Sofia? The Emperor of the Greeks and the Pacha of Caramania? or a Hungarian army commanded by Hungarian nobles, and led by a Hungarian king? Where were these allies on the day of battle?—When the trumpet sounded, when they met us ten to one, a thousand cimeters for every hundred lances, where were these succors from Italy and the East? Now, by St. Stephen! in all honor to his Eminence, the Cardinal of St. Angelo, I hold that they who choose the peril, may, with slight damage to their fair fame, reap the fruits of their valor!"

"Methinks the noble cardinal carries this matter too far!" said the Earl of Cillia, rising when Huniades had ended. "Had those allies joined us in the field, or had they taken up arms, stood boldly in their own defence, and held in check a part of the hostile forces, they might claim some consideration at our hands. Until this appear, we owe them no fidelity."

"Thou hast spoken wisely, Cillia!" said the king. "It were the part of folly, I trow, to burden our deliberations with the interests of those who have shunned to raise lance in our behalf."

"Not a blow have they struck in this war!" cried Huniades. "Neither do we now first learn to know the fickleness of these boasted allies. The emperor is selfish and wavering, and though a bitter enemy of Amurath, ye treacherous and crafty have we ever found the Caramanian—the succors of the church," he added, "are at best slow, and somewhat uncertain."

"Oh, my lords, how coldly do ye calculate," said the legate. "How carefully in the balance of self-interest do ye weigh the merits of a friend. Is it a light thing that the voice of the holy church has been raised in your behalf, that in my humble person she has sent her legate to sanctify your purposes, and give vigor to your arms? But the noble Huniades speaks over confidently. What knowest thou, my lord, of the fickleness of the Greek? His forces are now marching toward France, and his galleys ride in the Hellespont, with the fleets of Genoa, Venice, Flanders, and the Holy Sec. The Caramanian, too, is in the field, and upon the heads of both will burst the fury of the Moslem. Say, then, warriors of Hungary, shall they be sacrificed for you? Shall we close our ears to their cries? Shall we rest in peace while the tempest is rolling over the land of our brethren? or shall we unfold our

banners, cry St. Stephen, and the holy sepulchre! and march beneath the standard of the cross to the rescue!"

"In God's name, if this be so, we have little choice," exclaimed the king, his brow kindling, and his left hand grasping involuntarily the handle of his sword. "If they be in arms in our quarrel, we may not see them perish unaided."

"It were foul wrong!" said the Earl of Cillia, his voice checking the tumult which followed these words. "But are these tidings certain? We would have proof of this, my lord cardinal. Whence hast thou this news, which as yet forsooth has reached no ears but thine?"

"These lines are from Constantinople," said the cardinal, reaching a letter to Ladislaus. "The Greek patriarch writes that the emperor has sent his forces into Thrace, and exhorts us to advance boldly to join him beyond Mount Hemus. There, too, speaks the Caramanian," he continued, throwing down a missive before the king, while a smile of ill-concealed triumph lighted up his features.

"Now, by my kingly honor, these news tingle in the ear," exclaimed Ladislaus, when he had read aloud their contents. "Amurath abdicated! not on the throne!"

"So run the tidings," said the prelate. "Nor is this all. The right arm of Amurath was lopped on that day when ye conquered at Sofia. George de Castriot, the far famed Iscander Bey, has deserted from the tyrant, and retired with his hardy followers into Albania to defend his heritage. He will march to unite his forces to ours. Let but the cry of war be sounded, and twenty thousand Albanians will join our ranks, headed by that warrior whose peer is only to be found in this presence. What now shall keep us from the field? Soldiers, who listen to me, this is a holy warfare."

Loud cries of "Lead on, brave king! Succor for the Greek! Succor for the bold Caramanian!" burst from the assembled warriors, and filled the church with their echoes, while high above the tumult was heard the strong, clear voice of Huniades, exclaiming, "Our oath, my lord king, our oath, gentlemen of Hungary! remember the treaty of Segedin. Upon the sacred Scriptures have we sworn to keep faith with the Ottoman."

"And have ye not also sworn eternal war against the enemies of Christ?" exclaimed the cardinal. The tumult ceased as he spoke, and he proceeded to pour forth a strain of that commanding eloquence for which he was so distinguished, an eloquence which had given authority to his voice when he stood alone in the conclaves of Italy, and had oftentimes been crowned with success when it seemed much more distant than now. "To which of these two oaths will you remain faithful? Ye have made a treaty with the Moslem; but have you no treaty with your allies, your generous allies, who come from every side to your assistance, who fly to partake the perils of a war in which Heaven has so plainly blessed your first labors? It is to them, to your God, and your fellow Christians, that you have pledged your faith, and this prior

obligation annihilates your sacrilegious oath to the enemies of Christ. Will you, then, abandon them? What say I!—you abandon not only your allies, you leave without support and without hope those Christians whom you have promised to deliver from a cruel yoke, and give them a prey to the Infidel, whom your victories have irritated. The groans of so many victims will pursue you in your retreat, and accuse you before God and men. You close forever the gates of Asia to the ranks of the faithful, and render to the Ottoman the hope which he had lost of entering the countries of Christendom. What shall I say to the sovereign Pontiff who has sent me to you, not to treat with the Moslem, but to drive him beyond the sea? What shall I say to the pastors of the Christian church, to all the faithful of the West, who are now in prayer to demand from heaven success to your arms? And to what interests—answer me—to what interests have you sacrificed your own glory and the hopes and safety of the Christian world? Had not war given you all that Amurath has yielded? Would it not have given you yet more? And the pledges obtained by victory, do they not inspire more confidence than the promises of Infidels? Doubtless, the barbarians whom ye have twice vanquished would never have consented to peace, had they the means to continue the war. Think you they will observe its conditions when fortune shall be favorable to them? Christian warriors, then, can never remain bound by an oath which delivers the church and Europe to the disciples of Mahomet, an oath plainly contrary to religion and morality, to all which among men constitutes holiness and the faith of promises. Learn that there can be no peace between God and his enemies, between truth and falsehood, between heaven and hell. In the name of Christ I absolve you of your oath and sanctify your arms, and exhort you by your hopes of heaven, by the promises of the holy evangelists, to arm and follow me in the road of Glory and Salvation.”

As the wind which proclaims the storm shakes at intervals the trees of the forest, so did these words, as they broke from the lips of the cardinal, sway to and fro that vast assembly. When he had ended, the tumult was like the immediate presence of the tempest. War seemed to sound from every lip and to gleam from every eye. Banners were unfurled, lances shaken aloft, and drawn swords glanced like flashes of lightning from the dark iron cloud which pervaded every portion of the edifice. Deafening shouts were heard on all sides, “It is the will of God! No truce with the enemies of Christ!” and other similar exclamations which evinced the overwrought emotions of the assembly, and left no doubt as to the issue of its deliberations. Not an opposing voice was heard. Even Huniades hid his face in his hands and remained silent. The king himself was foremost in advising a new campaign and instant preparations for hostilities. Messengers, he urged, must be despatched forthwith to their eastern allies, and others westwardly to recall the French and Burgundian knights, who, dissatisfied with the truce, had returned homeward. All was fervor and enthusiasm, and after a short deliberation war was resolved upon in form by those who but a few weeks before had sworn to a ten years’ truce with the Ottoman.

During this while Juliani maintained perfect silence. A smile lurked upon his lip, and now and then a glance of fire, which he could not conceal, flashed from his dark eye as he watched these headlong proceedings. Yet he gave no counsel, advised no measures, but let the ardor of the assembly run its course unchecked and undirected. After it had subsided, however, in some degree, he arose again. "I know ye now," he exclaimed, "for true soldiers of the cross, and I invoke the blessing of Heaven upon your arms. Good tidings will the news of this day's deliberations be to all Christendom. These resolves are most noble, these plans most wise, and pointed with a certain aim at glorious success. But all is not yet done. It remains to profit by such advantage as Providence has placed within your hands. There is a prisoner in the camp of much weight in the divan of the Sultan. Let him be secured and held as a hostage, to protect those allies whom we have for a time left helpless, against the cruelty of his master. He is the captive of one, who as I hear on all sides, has borne him most bravely in this holy war. He will not, methinks, deny him to us. Let an order then go forth, and the Bey of Roumelia be placed in durance until the issue of this contest may show more clearly how he shall be dealt with at our hands." As he ended his eyes fell full upon the Walachian, who, with Huniades and a few other nobles that remained proof against the exhortations of the legate, was speaking earnestly of the result of the day's council.

The young knight changed color for a moment, and then turning to those who stood around, he asked, "Did I hear rightly, gentlemen? Spake he not of a prisoner and of durance? By heaven, there is but one prisoner in the camp and he is mine—the captive of this good sword, which must first fail its master!"

"Hold!" interrupted Huniades, laying his broad hand upon his shoulder. "It is of no avail. The storm which yon priest has brewed is but half spent. Mine own voice is vain—the king and nobles are at his feet. Therefore, have patience, boy, until there shall appear some show of returning reason."

"Nay, I must speak," said the Walachian, freeing himself from the grasp of his chief and turning towards the king. "Most gracious sovereign," he began, "the reverend prelate, though endowed with all sanctity, has seen too little of camps to judge between a knight and his honor. Were it not so, he would not need to be reminded that a prisoner once admitted to ransom is in no way subject to the will of his captor, but as a free man, may depart unquestioned and unhindered. Say I not truth, noble king, and ye gentlemen of Hungary?"

"Ay, by my life, truth and no lie," exclaimed Huniades, looking scornfully upon the cardinal. "By heaven, this holy father deems us as yielding of our honor as the warm dames of Italy. For myself, God be thanked, I have no prisoners, but were there such in my tent, be he prelate or pope who might demand them, a file of spears should guard them from wrong."

"No wrong is purposed," answered the prelate coldly. "Need I again

declare that this truce, by which all prisoners were to be set free, is void, even as though it existed not. The loss shall not be thine, Sir Knight. If the ransom be not paid, let it be told out of the treasures of the kingdom."

The temper of the young knight, for to him were these last words addressed, was well under his control. Notwithstanding the look of scorn which accompanied them, he replied with calmness, yet earnestly and loftily. "It is not for gain that I would keep plighted' faith, neither for gain would I break it, be the advantage what it might, that it would bring to me. I think there is no good knight in this presence who would charge me with such baseness. I well believe," he repeated, looking slowly around him, "that there is none such here. I think likewise, in truth, that there is here no brave man who having borne a foeman to the earth, and granted him his life and fixed his price of ransom, would retract his promise. Is there one here so unmindful of his honor? I believe there is none such. Neither am I such a one. I hold my fame at too high a price to suffer it to bear a stain like this. My word is passed for the safety of yonder Ottoman; let this suffice thee, holy father."

"The king and the barons of Hungary will doubtless take thy honor into their own keeping," said the legate, haughtily.

"By heaven, my lord cardinal, yonder Moslem is my prisoner, and shall go forth free, ransomed or unransomed, or neither I nor my Walachians will strike another blow in this cause."

At these words murmurs were heard throughout the assembly, and the king said in a stern tone, "Sir Knight, thou dost presume too much upon our favor. Thy words are too bold, and outrun our forbearance."

"It were strange," said the cardinal, turning to the rest as if it were beneath him longer to exchange words with so humble an opponent, "It were strange if the will of a single knight might thwart the wishes of this high assembly. I know the rights of captors and the worth of a promise made upon the field to an enemy; but has Christendom no rights, have our allies none, that the freedom of a Moslem must stand in the way of their advantage? Shall their welfare be sacrificed to an idle phantom? for honor has no place between Infidel and Christian. When the wrath of Amurath shall be turned against our Greek brethren, will we regret that we hold in our power that which may prove a check to his fury? We shall act wisely, then, to keep this Turkish prince as a safeguard against the treachery of barbarians to whom an oath is but idle air."

"Hark, in thine ear," said Huniades in a whisper to the Walachian. "Withdraw from the council while the cardinal is spinning his smooth web of words. Withdraw carefully and unobserved. Cross to the camp, place yonder Infidel upon a fleet steed, and bid him spur homeward. One hour well used may put leagues of good road between him and his pursuers. When the cardinal has ended, I myself will say somewhat to give thee time." The young knight waited not to reply. Making his way slowly and steal-

thily through the crowd, he gained the door of the cathedral, descended into the street, threw himself upon his steed and rode at a quick pace towards the river.

Though but a few moments elapsed while he rode down the steep and winding streets of the city, crossed the bridge of boats, and spurred along the opposite side of the river towards the encampment; yet during these he gave himself time for some reflection, and when he arrived at the tent of his prisoner he had resolved in his own mind the means most likely to ensure his safety. Here he leaped lightly from his horse, gave a hasty order to the attendant who received his bridle, then pushed aside the drapery which covered the entrance, and found himself in the presence of Ali Pacha. He was seated in the fashion of his country upon a carpet spread out over the ground. "God be with thee, Sir Moslem," exclaimed the Walachian, in answer to the grave salutation of his guest—"but up, up; this is no time for friendly greetings. Remove thy turban, and don yonder helmet. Nay, reply not—there—prove now how thy pulse will beat beneath steel cuirass."

"Thou art of a joyous race," said the Moslem, who in his first surprise had suffered the knight to remove his jewelled turban and place upon his head a knight's casque. "Thou dost invent some jest, some gay device, to scare sadness from the tent of the stranger."

"I would forego the best blow, save one, that this arm ever dealt in battle, if it might be as thou sayest, a jest," replied the Walachian. "But buckle to thy cuirass—nay, start not at the cross upon thy shoulder; with us it is a friendly signal, a sign of safety and ransom. God grant it may prove such to thee this day!"

"The green turban makes not its wearer a descendant of the prophet," said the Moslem gravely. "Nor the cross upon the shoulder a true follower of Isa ben Miriam."

"Right, right! that has this day's work plainly shown. Now for greaves, gauntlet and vambrace. A good steed awaits thee without—thou must mount and ride hence upon the instant. There is war between us and thy people. The smooth tongue of yon false priest has prevailed in the council against the voice of truth and knightly honor."

"By the beard of the prophet, these are strange tidings," said the Bey. "Away then with this mockery. I must depart in truth, but not in Christian garb."

"From the shame that sits in my face, canst thou not read the rest?" said the knight. "Order is taken for thy imprisonment. Thou wilt be held as a hostage to secure the Greek against the resentment of thy master, unless in this disguise thou canst happily make thy escape."

Ali's eyes flashed fire, his lip curled disdainfully, and he gazed upon the Walachian with a mingled expression of incredulity and scorn. The young knight turned proudly to him, dashed away the tear which seemed gathering in his eye, and exclaimed, "Spare thy wonder, Sir Moslem. Away, while



there is time. Speed thee to thy home, and tell the followers of the prophet what thou hast this day beheld—a sight, I wot, that pagan eyes have rarely feasted on—a Christian knight weeping over the dishonor of his country.”

“The bitterness of the heart giveth license to the tongue,” replied the Ottoman, compassionately. “Honor is the food of the true Moslem, and brave men feast not on the tears of shame. My brother,” he continued, while his voice faltered, “I will depart. In the remembrance of thee, my wrongs, and the stain upon thy people, are forgotten.”

“Away then without delay; and that thou mayest know all, that thou mayest not linger, learn that Amurath is no longer on the throne.”

“Morad not upon the throne!” exclaimed the Moslem; “who then wields the sceptre of the faithful?”

“He has resigned it into the hands of his son, into the hands of Mahomet, a child—so run the tidings—who must needs bend before the storm which now threatens thy land.”

“Allah is great and turneth the hearts of princes at his will,” said the Bey, without emotion. “Let mine own Arab be saddled, Sir Knight. Let me but turn his head toward Ederneh, and the footsteps of Zeinab will outstrip the wind.”

“Nay, this were to draw all eyes upon thee, and would prove sure destruction. It is not the fleetness of thy horse that will save thee. To the south and east the passes are in the hands of the Christians. At every step thy pursuers will find fresh steeds, while for thee no one will guide or aid thee in any manner. Therefore, ride thou northwardly, it will be the best, and until the heat of the pursuit be passed, betake thyself to the castle of Moritz Von Arnheim. These lines,” he added, writing a few words hastily, “will commend thee to his care. Give them to him, and say they come from him who disarmed him at Istatu.” Ali Pacha closed his vizor to hide the emotion which showed itself in his face. “There, now thy disguise is perfect,” cried the Walachian. “Bear thyself but somewhat more gaily than thou art wont, and few eyes will discern the Moslem in thee; and for no cause lay aside this harness. Let not the scruples of thy creed move thee, for when life is the stake, one must not view these matters of belief too narrowly. If questioned, say thou art bound by a vow.”

“And for how long shall I remain hid in yonder castle?” asked the Moslem. “My duty, which summons me loudly towards Ederneh may urge me forth prematurely, and again, the well-praised hospitality of the baron might keep me over long beneath his roof.”

Aye, and there dwells a maiden there, who to most warriors would not let the time prove long,” said the knight, smiling.

“It were well, therefore, thou shouldst tell me accurately whether for two days or three, or for how many soever I must needs tarry, that I be spared all doubt or hesitation.”

“When the way is open thou shalt hear from me,” said the Walachian, “or

if aught threaten thee in thy concealment. And now to horse," he added, leading him forth from the tent where a good steed was chafing in the hands of an attendant. "Ride boldly across the bridge, pass through the city, and gain the banks of the river above. Thus far make thy way idly and carelessly that no suspicion be remembered when thou art sought after. When once without the walls, ride at what pace thou wilt. Farewell! when the time favors, speed safely to thy country, and for the sake of him who now speaks to thee, forget the treachery of his brothers in arms. Report well of them in what thou canst; remember the noble Huniades, Moritz Von Arnheim, and many others who have had no part in this faithlessness."

"I need but think upon thee only, noble Christian, when the honor of thy country is assailed," replied the Bey; "yet ere I depart give me some token of amity and friendliness as is the custom among you western warriors—the chain which hangs upon thy breast, and in exchange take from me this plume."

"Nay, it is my lady's favor," said the Walachian. He stepped for a moment into his tent, and returned with one of equal value, which he flung around the neck of the Ottoman. "Receive thou this," he said, "and instead of the jewelled feather, give me yon ribbon which thou hast placed so carefully beneath thy cuirass."

"I won it in the tournament at Pesth," said Ali Pacha, "and I will keep it in remembrance of that day. But take thou the plume, and in the heat of battle wear it upon thy crest, my sabre then will seek another foeman."

"Hold! hold! Sir Moslem! I will receive it upon no such terms. I will wear it, if thou wilt, as a pledge of battle, that when we meet in the *melee*, thou mayest know that a good knight stands before thee, ready to receive honorable combat at thy hands."

"Wear it as thou wilt," said the Bey. "For thy gift, I receive it either as a pledge of amity or as a gage of battle."

"They are the same with brave foes," said the knight, grasping his armed hand and bidding him again farewell.

"I would," said Ali Pacha, lingering; "I would that yonder knight had been more speedy. I am loth to depart and leave this quarrel unfought between us."

"All things promise most fairly for the meeting," replied the Walachian. "Ere the month be past, I doubt not, ye will stand face to face in the field."

"Let him look to it then that he lose not helmet and head, instead of plumed crest. Allah be with thee, Sir Knight. Farewell!" The Walachian pressed the hand which the Moslem held out to him. The latter drew it presently from his grasp, passed it across his shoulder and pressed him to his bosom in silence; then threw himself upon his steed and rode at an easy pace towards the river.

"A man, a noble man, be he Turk or Christian!" exclaimed the young knight with much emotion, as he gazed after him. "In a good cause, with

him at my side, how gladly would I wield lance against a score of yonder traitors. What strange sympathy binds me to him ? By heaven, I have felt more pleasure in this short moment than I have known in many years—save in thy presence, in thine, dear Bertha. Speed thee safely to thy home, valiant and noble Moslem. God will not curse thy country if there be ten such in the camp of the Sultan, thy master, let our priests say what they will "

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## CHAPTER IX.

### SECLUSION.

WHERE two hearts long bound in friendship mingle in unison together, a source of quiet and enduring happiness dwells perpetually in the bosom. We feel that we are not alone, that there is one in whose love we can repose, let the world around frown upon us as it will. Wherever our path leads us a fresh stream winds with it,—covers it with verdure, and we pass onward without toil. But when a noble deed comes to us at the hand of a stranger, it stirs us with a deeper emotion. To meet a kindred spirit hitherto unknown, but by one act become most dear and familiar, the very depths of the soul spring up, as a fountain when first unsealed, wells upward to the light. Oh, this is a new found treasure,—an oasis in the desert, as we wander along the waste places of life ! There, petty malice, creeping slander, ingratitude, envy, with its venomous tooth, vexed and goaded us as we toiled onward ; here, we find repose, and how pure and rich must be that joy which can render us forgetful of our griefs, and make us sweet amends. Complaint then yields to gratitude ; we kneel down in our hearts and thank God that he has made us as we are. Emotions like these dwelt in the bosom of Ali as he parted from the Walachian. His present peril was forgotten. The interests of his country, now so much at hazard, his means of escape bore no part in his thoughts. The nobleness and generosity of his captor, his manly fidelity and truthfulness, alone occupied him. So deeply, indeed, was he wrapped in his musings that he scarcely noticed the course of his steed, the pace at which he rode, or any object around him. As he passed the place of council, and heard the confused shouts which came from those assembled within, he looked up for a moment. At any other time he would have invoked the curses of Allah upon them in words of the bitterest scorn, but he smiled only, and kept onward, busied with his pleasant thoughts. And thus he pursued his way until the walls of the city were far behind him. As he approached the castle, however, the currents of his feelings changed. Another emotion, of a less noble, doubtless, but more bewitching nature, took posses-

sion of him. He was about to become an inmate of the same walls which contained her whom he so devoutly worshipped,—to be thrown into daily and perhaps intimate relation with one whom he had considered as hopelessly beyond his reach. He knew well the peril which this might bring to his peace; but how enticing was it! Love, with the brightest eyes seemed to smile upon him from those grey walls, and to beckon him to his happiness. He cast away his fears and resolved to commit himself without reserve to the caprice of accident, and to the wild hopes which opportunity kindled within his bosom. His heart beat quickly as he advanced, and its swelling emotions checked the utterance of his thoughts which he would have given to the still heath and the green wood as he rode onward. When the huge battlements and turrets of the castle rose upon his view, his agitation seemed to diminish, but it was concealed only and repressed by the efforts of his resolution. He pushed forward perseveringly, giving all heed to objects around him, guiding his steed with care and maintaining a perfect seat upon the saddle, by these means diverting his mind so far as was possible from self-reflection.

He crossed the drawbridge, rode into the court, dismounted from his horse, which he gave in charge to a menial, and in a few words desired to be shown to the Baron Von Arnheim. He followed the domestic who led him up the narrow winding stairs into the great hall, and then retired, leaving him alone. In a few moments the master of the castle entered. The old man's warm and friendly greeting was received with strange coldness and reserve on the part of his unknown guest. To the welcome which he received he replied in a few words of thanks, and then placed in the hands of the baron the lines which he had received from the Walachian, saying, "I bring thee this from him who disarmed thee in the field of Istatu."

"Disarmed!" cried the old man, "by St. Stephen, Sir Knight, here is some error. True it is, God wots, I came off from that field with no great advantage, but not an accursed hound of them all mastered either sword or lance. My lance was splintered, as if it had been of glass, into a thousand pieces, and, for my sword, I did not loose it from my hold until yonder Walachian—ha! comes this from him? Thou art doubly welcome; yes," continued Von Arnheim, warmly, "it went there busily and bloodily;—I can never think nor speak of it enough,—horse and man, Turk and Christian, backward and forward, over and under, and I was in the midst of the tumult. Then comes yonder knight pushing his horse into the press, breaks his lance against one, and down goes an infidel; draws me then his two-handed sword, and bears back the crowd over a good stretch of ground, riding down some who were not quick enough from his path. And well was it for me that he came thus in season. The Pacha or Bey, or whatever he is, had his sword already raised over my head, when crash falls the weapon of the Walachian, and as quick as lightning

the cimeter of the Turk meets it. Both blades break into fragments, and the Moslem is borne to the earth. Then takes the good knight my weapon which I made no scruple to give up, for I was fairly unable to wield it. Well, thou knowest the rest. I was borne out of the fray, the Pacha was overthrown and made prisoner, and his army routed."

"Yet I have heard it said," replied the other, "that the Turkish blade did not break with that blow."

"Wast thou there in the field, Sir Knight?" asked Von Arnheim, smiling incredulously.

"A solemn vow hindered me from fighting for the cross on that day," was the reply. "Yet I know it from one who was present, and has since seen and handled that good cimeter. There is a dent upon its edge, but the trusty weapon turned aside the blow which was meant for its master, and another hand, that of a common man at arms, had already wounded the Bey of Roumelia. I have heard, too, that when he held his sword over the head of that old knight, that he paused, and would have had a prisoner rather than a life."

"By St. Stephen, it is as I have said," exclaimed the baron, "and I know it well. Thy tale, in truth, has little reason in it, for though the Infidel be brave enough, yet when had a Moslem mercy for a Christian? But here comes Siegfried with the wine. Undo thy casque, and pledge me 'To the field of Istatu.'"

Ali put aside the proffered goblet, and muttered some incoherent words of excuse.

"How! dost thou refuse the pledge?" cried Von Arnheim in wonder. "Thou wast not present in that battle, but does thine envy of those who had better fortune reach thus far? Thou wilt not drain a cup of wine in memory of that day!"

"Be its name accursed!" exclaimed the Moslem, with an energy of which he was unaware.

The baron started in surprise. The color mounted in his face, and he said, striving to repress his anger, "Sir Knight, thou art welcome to the hospitality of my poor dwelling; thou hast been sent hither by too worthy a hand to permit that I should refuse thee such honor as is due from one knight to another. But I must needs say that I hold it most uncourteous in thee to slight my pledge, above all, one so fair and honest, such as each true Christian, methinks, might quaff with a right good will. And let me say it once and forever, that in this matter of Istatu my humor is somewhat headstrong."

"How knowest thou what cause I have to curse that name? How know'st thou what I lost on that bloody day?" answered the Bey, and in a tone so clear and melting that it found its way to the heart of the old baron.

"Is it so, then?" he said, compassionately. "A brother in arms, per-

haps, or one near of kin. Well, well, he fell in a holy hour, and his grave is wet with the best blood of Christendom, passing by, as of no worth, the pools which flowed from the veins of Infidels. Think no more of my words, Sir Knight, and if at times I fill to that glorious day, and it happens often in sooth, I will for thy sake do it with somewhat less glee; and if thou wilt name to me him for whom thou dost mourn, I will drink half the goblet to his memory. But why stand we thus with the wine untasted? Drink, Sir Knight, and do thou thyself name the pledge."

"A vow forbids me," answered the Moslem. "That vow which hindered me from fighting in the Christian ranks at Istatu forbids me to touch my lips to the urn—the enlivening draught. Yet, if thou wilt do me this grace, I will give the memory of my companions in arms who fell on that field."

"Thy companions in arms!" said Von Arnheim, raising his eyes devoutly, and placing the goblet near his lips. "May God receive them to his rest!" With these words he drained the cup, then stepped to the window to read the lines which he still held in his hand unopened. When he had read them his face lighted up with a smile. "So, by my life! a trait of the old times. It likes me well, Sir Unknown, since I am to have no name but this for thee. Mayst thou prosper in thy adventure, be it for love or honor. And this will be better fortune than was mine the last time I engaged in the like. Ha, ha! it was at the time when our good king, Sigismund, was imprisoned by his rebellious subjects as he fled from the field of Nicopolis, where Bajazet had defeated us with grievous slaughter. Some of the nobles were discontented with the king, and had offered the crown to Ladislaus of Naples. After the entry of the Neapolitan into Zara he must needs hold a tournament to celebrate his success, for we had certainly come by the worst in the campaign. When we heard of it, there was George of Oedenburg, Savioli, an Italian, and myself, nothing would serve but we must be present at the sport, for there were some among them whom we would have gladly encountered, whether in jest or earnest. We swore upon our sword hilts, by all the saints, that we would set forward, and not turn back for any thing in the shape of danger. Well, we took horse, armed at all points, and rode into the town in the train of the Bishop of Zagrab, and as carelessly as if we had an equal right with the rest, and no more to fear. Whether it proved so!—but thou shalt hear. It was soon known in Zara that there were wandering knights who would be present at the tournament, but who we were, none could guess, as at no time did we put off our steel, but ate, drank,—aye, and slept harnessed as we were, for as I said, there were those in Zara who owed us no good will, and, least of all, Oedenburg, for an old quarrel with the bishop's nephew. In the lists all went happily. Each of us broke three spears with as many combatants, and in no encounter lost any advantage, but in the most gained it; and we might have come off with honor, but

the hot-headed Italian must needs run another course,—was thrown to the ground, wounded, and unhelmeted. Ladislaus knew him, for he was a bitter enemy to the Neapolitan, grew red in the face, and swore we should rue our temerity. Nothing would help, we must to prison. Savioli died there of his wounds,—God rest his soul. George was rescued by some of his mad kinsmen; and, as for me, five months in a dungeon and a round ransom was the price I paid for the jest. I rode home out of humor, as you will easily believe, and heartily tired of my adventure. It was the last,—I foreswore all such; but it warms my heart to see the old custom step forth into life again. I drink this, Sir Knight, to the success of thy adventure!"

"Thanks, worthy baron," replied the Moslem, "and, though I drink not, I return it with my best wishes for thy welfare."

"But what tidings dost thou bring, sir knight? Thou art newly from the encampment where there is ever somewhat stirring."

"I have heard rumors that the Infidels have broken the truce, and will make an inroad into the lands of the faithful."

"Broken the truce!" cried Von Arnheim. "Already! By heaven, they are somewhat hasty. They had sworn to it for ten years, and the hounds can scarce rest for as many weeks. May God curse them!"

"Aye, may the curse of heaven light on all who have part in this treachery," re-echoed the Moslem. "And I think not that it will prosper with them. There is a power above us that sways the purposes of men and watches over the safety of his children."

"Well said, sir knight, well said," exclaimed the baron. "In God and his blessed mother will we put our trust when need is at the highest. Yet it oftentimes goes strangely. We draw out in battle against the infidel, armed in the cause of heaven,—the cross against the crescent, yet if they outnumber us too greatly, or if the ground be by any chance ill chosen, and unsuited for the career, all this goes for nothing; we must even turn bridle and yield the field, oftentimes not without sore loss,—for it cannot be denied that the dogs have sometimes the advantage over us. I know not how it is. Father Antonio shall give me his thoughts touching the matter. Yet who would have looked for it! The good faith of Amurath is a proverb even with Christians,—but thus it is with the best of them."

"Nay, I will not be warrant, noble baron, that thou wilt find these tidings as I have given them, yet it was thus that I received them."

"I will despatch a messenger to the camp on the morrow," said Von Arnheim. "Yet if it be so we must even take up lance again and buckle armor over our newly-skinned wounds. But here is father Antonio to bear thee company. Since thy vow debars thee from wine, and the word *Istatu* grates so harshly upon thine ears, the good monk will suit thee better as a companion."

"Nay, assert nothing too rashly, noble baron," said father Antonio, who had entered in time to hear the old man's last words. "I am a man of peace, and sort not readily with those whose trade is war,—neither does this vow that thou hast mentioned delight me overmuch."

"Ye of this land set much store by the vine, as one may easily see who sojourns for a while among you," said the Moslem.

"And why should they not, Sir Knight? My worthy host, why should ye not set store by the vine? Let Infidels, Turks, and Pagans slight the noble fruit, but for a Christian! that were a sin and a shame! Aye, a sin, I say, for besides that it is a neglect of heaven's bounty, find we not herein an outward sign by which the true believer may be known from a hound of Islam? This is plain, I think, and not to be gainsayed. I hold it, therefore, a duty, and exhort all thereto, to quaff freely, wheresoever we may be, and prove our faith before men."

"That thou hast well said, father Antonio," cried the baron, laughing. "And us of Hungary it touches most nearly. We lie side by side with the Turk, and come oftentimes into close dealings with him, both hostile and peaceful, therefore here, if any where, should the lines be closely drawn. We are much bounden to thee, holy father, that thou hast shown us so fair and honest a way to maintain our name as good Christians and despisers of the false prophet. Thou needest not fear that we shall come into any suspicion so long as the grape ripens upon our hills."

"Hardly would any suspect thee, worthy baron, of error on this point," answered the monk, gravely. "And we of Italy have also a conscience,—we also must make our faith appear. But thou, Sir Knight, dost seem held somewhat in the bonds of Satan. Thou hast made unto thyself a law after the teachings of the false prophet. Not that I blame thee, each after his way, only—"

"Aye, each after his way," interrupted Von Arnheim. "Do thou, Sir Unknown, use my poor castle at thy pleasure. Drink water, if thou wilt, or wine, it matters not; wear thine armor at bed and board, no one shall disturb thee in it, or pry curiously into thy secret. If thou art for homilies and ghostly exhortations, or dost desire masses for thy companions in arms, father Antonio stands at thy service, seeing that he has little to do in this wise here in my household. But, for me, my mood is different, and our intercourse will hardly be as cheerful as I had hoped." With these words the baron left the apartment without waiting for a reply. Father Antonio gazed with a look of wonder upon the stranger as he stood gloomy and motionless before him, hesitated for a moment, shook his head mysteriously, and said, "God be with thee, Sir Unknown. Thy mood is altogether different from mine, also," then made his way after the baron, leaving the Moslem to the solitude of his own thoughts.



## CHAPTER X.

## BERTHA.

ALI Pacha had now become an inmate of the baron's castle. Thrown thus by his strange fortune amid new scenes, he found it no easy task to him to preserve his disguise. He had some knowledge, it is true, of the habits of the Christians, of the usages and duties of a knight, but his experience had for the most part been drawn from life in the camp. He was now placed, however, in a new relation toward the Giaours, that of a guest received into familiar and domestic intercourse. An unconstrained courtesy and gentleness of demeanor were here expected of him, unlike the grave and stately manners of his own people. Customs to which he was a stranger, the duties of social life, with their varied demands arising hourly around him, called for all his skill and watchfulness, and often placed his secret in much peril. Bertha's presence also perplexed him, drew his thoughts from himself, and betrayed him into many errors.

The baron, however, soon ceased to trouble himself about his unknown guest ; neither did the monk, Antonio, evince a great desire for his society. His singular vow concerning wine would of itself have been sufficient to prevent harmony between them, but it was not long before the good father discovered other peculiarities about the stranger. He was ignorant of all games, such as tables, tennis, and the like, which Antonio held to be indispensable to a good knight, and with which he would have gladly helped away the hours. In addition to this he noticed with much concern his neglect of religious duties ; orisons, mass, vespers, confessions ; he valued all alike, gave them not a thought, but demeaned himself as if there were no such thing as a holy church upon the earth, or a pious gifted father in God within the very walls of the castle itself. Once, indeed, he endeavored to represent the knight's negligence to his mind in its true colors, hoping to dispose him to a better course, but his cold, silent manner filled him with wonder and awe ; the old man was forced to believe that Satan's power over the stranger was too strong to be subdued by his efforts, and he resolved to commit all future care of him to heaven. Left thus to himself by his host and the monk, Ali was thrown into so much the closer intimacy with Bertha,—her, whose presence alone cast a charm over this concealment. And though to her, also, the conduct of the stranger was not without mystery, yet it possessed nothing repulsive for her,—nay, it seemed rather to attract her to him. She willingly gave up to him many an hour ; she became the partner of his walks, listened with interest to his words, and wondered at the strange foreign tone which pervaded all he said. She could not tell from what land came those sayings, those soft wild tales which he recounted. All seemed to point to a knight of Spain

or Rhodes, one whose life had been spent much among the infidels, yet she could not banish the thought that it was not now for the first time that they had met, though when or where, had passed from her recollection. And what art, although undesigned, lay in all he said; what eloquence, taught him by his heart alone. Images and thoughts that were new to her, customs heretofore repulsive, points of faith, religious observances at variance with her own, woven in glowing words, with moving incidents, with traits of natural nobleness and virtue, found a ready entrance at her ear, enchained her interest, and breathed into her soul a spirit that was near akin to paganism itself. Oftentimes, it is true, she would reprove him, blame much that he said, and accuse him of great disloyalty and infidelity, yet seldom seriously, but as it seemed less in earnest than in sportive mockery. Her feelings appeared daily to become more pliant; in his presence she forgot the flight of the hours, and when her father remarked to her the absence of the Walachian, she started and owned to herself that the unknown knight had occupied too great a share of her thoughts. Still, however, she did not feel this reproach so deeply as to believe herself bound to avoid him, to deny herself a pleasure which threw so bright a hue over the hours. Gay and careless by nature, she felt that she might follow without fear whithersoever the happiness of the moment might beckon her, and she did not pause to bestow a thought on him, or ask herself what danger it might bring to his peace. And what pleasure was it to him to be with her, to gaze upon her,—pleasure unequalled and most dangerous to the fire-hearted Moslem. Custom had not armed his bosom against the seductive magic of such an intercourse, which to a western knight would have been without half its perils; a glance inflamed him,—fell, like glowing bolt, melting into his soul; a smile made his heart leap with its fancied promise, and to touch her hand, or inhale the sweetness of her breath, filled him with sweet longing and desire. The echo of sounds from home died away within his bosom, friends seemed forgotten,—even loyalty and faith appeared drowned in the rushing current of passion that swept over his soul.

Within a short distance of the castle, the bank of the river was cultivated to the water's edge. Groups of trees were scattered around, thickening, as they withdrew from the Danube, into a dense forest, where the old baron often went to hunt. Near the river was a garden, enclosed and filled with shrubs and flowers, with a walled house for the more delicate plants which were the immediate care of Bertha. One day while the sun was still high above the horizon, they walked here together, side by side, along the margin of the river. Engaged in alternate gay discourse, they passed onward, until they reached a point of land which projected far out into the Danube. This small promontory was somewhat higher than the rest of the bank, and afforded a noble view both above and below along the stream. "Look once at this scene," said Bertha, as she paused, directing the attention of her companion

towards it. "How pleasantly stands the castle by the river, the lengthening woods, and at a distance the mountains which stretch themselves far away until the eye cannot tell where heaven and earth meet at the horizon. We think with us there is scarcely a fairer view in Hungary."

"Aye, it is a pleasing picture," replied Ali Pacha, with a deep sigh, "and for one who had not seen other lands, it might serve as his darling landscape, whereon to fasten his best remembrances and hopes,—but yet—"

"But yet—Well, speak out Sir Knight," said the maiden, with a smile, after waiting in vain for the conclusion of his sentence. "I shall not take it amiss if thou dost view it with other eyes than mine. But I can guess thy thoughts, Thou wouldst say that thou hast looked upon scenes far lovelier, to which this before us can bear no comparison. Is it not so?"

"I will confess that something of this kind was in my thoughts. Nature has spread all before us with a friendly, bounteous hand, and placed it so, and given it a form and feature that it speaks at once to the heart. But she has greater magic than this. Couldst thou follow this stream to the broad sea into which it flows, thou wouldst not wonder that I hesitate to answer thee. There wouldst thou behold at once the glory of two worlds. On this side, Europe, lying in her majesty, on the other, Asia, with her luxurious gardens. Oh, surely there, if any were upon the earth, has heaven prepared the seats of paradise."

"Thou hast prevented my reply," said the maiden. "I looked to hear thee speak of thine own home, of France, Italy, or Spain, and the beauties of all have been sounded in mine ears. Now, it is the gay Frenchman who exhausts himself in praises of the plains and vineyards of his country; then the knight of Italy, who falls into raptures when he speaks of the Po, the Sea, the Apennines; again does the true-hearted German sigh at the name of the hill-crowned Rhine, and swear high and loud that it is the queen of rivers. To all these I have but one answer; it is thy home, Sir Knight, and I think that I have answered well. So is this mine, and it shall not stand a step below the rest. But to thee, Sir Unknown, what shall I say? I must bethink me of some other answer, for thy home is hardly upon the banks of the Euxine."

"The home of the warrior is in the camp, fair lady, and he must often change it to suit the will of his lord. I have sojourned in those lands."

"That I have plainly seen from much that has escaped thee," rejoined the maiden, smiling. "Well, thou canst tell me then of their customs, of their maidens that come from Persia, Arabia, yes, even from the Indies, who are beautiful as the day. Oh, how I have longed to hear of them. No knight comes hither, but I inquire of the ladies of his land, how they pass the time, their amusements, dress, and whatever else their is to ask and to hear, and I find little difference between the life of an Italian or German dame and my own—but a Circassian, a Georgian beauty, oh! that must be altogether a different thing! And their warriors, their princes, their gay dwellings and palaces, and the splendor with which everything is arranged!"

Ali smiled at the eager curiosity of his fair questioner, and was easily moved to gratify it. He commenced now to speak more fully than heretofore of the customs of his own land. He described to her scenes of eastern magnificence, related tales of wild adventure, tales of the harem, of jealous lord and faithless slave, of maiden borne on fleet steed in the arms of her lover. As he spoke his heart warmed, his passion lent fire to his words, and he drew fresh eloquence from the interest that was pictured in the beautiful features of his listener. When he touched upon the war with Amurath, and told the varied incidents of the past campaign, his eye seemed to flash fire, and his voice to sound like the echoing cymbal and clang of cimeter. A spirit so strange and new breathed in his every word, that Bertha became more and more perplexed. She could not understand who it might be that was pouring, with such power, images so warm and wild into her fancy. When he described the Pagan Sultan, and praised his magnanimity and courage, his justice and benevolence, his voice became more mild in its tone, and he spoke of him as a son would speak of his father.

"Thy words are those of a very Moslem," said Bertha, when he had ended. "With us how differently do we paint him."

"There are many even among the Christians who do justice to his worth, and in this truce does not the peace of Europe rest upon his word alone? Yet, true it is, that most among you put little faith in his promises. Ye paint him in colors borrowed from your own scorn and hatred, and then start back from the picture. Ye name him tyrant, cruel and unjust. Ye look for no good from one whose creed differs from your own. Should the Sultan, forgetting his oath upon the Koran, set at nought this truce, and come with fire and sword into Hungary, slaying and taking captives—"

The curse of Heaven would light upon his treachery!" exclaimed Bertha, warmly; "but our good warriors would know how to set bounds to his fury. Dost thou believe this possible, Sir Knight?"

"Possible! The conditions of that truce are violated already."

"It was foolish and ill-advised in our good king and his nobles to put faith in the word of a Moslem. A better trust had been in their own swords."

"But how if the Christians should be the first to take up arms? How, if unprovoked, they themselves should light up the flames of war, neglecting their oath and honor?"

"Oh, this they cannot do, if they would keep their good name unstained; if they would hope for the blessing of God upon their arms."

And still, I doubt not, your priests would find a way to silence such scruples. They are Infidels, they would cry, and ye need keep no faith with the enemies of heaven. With the same eyes, also, do ye view their warfare. If in the fervor of the battle, the Ottoman is relentless and unsparing, ye exclaim with curses against his cruelty. Ye can count every knight that is slain, and lament that a star is gone from the bright heaven of chivalry; but for them they are Turkish dogs. Yet fair eyes bewail them, though not

Christian eyes. Thus it is with you, and the Moslem is not backward to return the scorn. As for Morad, I have been often near him, and know well what manner of man he is. Though fearful to his enemies, yet he is a father to his people, and just, and an observer of his word. Though his hand is accustomed to raise the sword, yet it delights him rather to cover the land with monuments of his benevolence and piety. Mosques, Khans and Imares rear their—”

Although Bertha had listened thus far with interest, yet at these words a smile stole upon her face, which at last ended in loud and merry laughter. “This I had not expected,” she exclaimed. “Here hast thou, Sir Unknown, a Christian knight, been ascribing to Amurath every virtue under the sun, and I have been foolish enough to receive all for truth. But with one word hast thou marred all—the piety of Amurath, sayst thou?”

“Nay, mistake me not,” cried Ali Pacha. “I do not pass judgment upon his faith. I know well that it is no part of a warrior to discuss creeds; but gaily to die for his own, be it what it may. Yet be the creed of Morad good or evil, who will say that it is not meritorious to follow its precepts, to revere its truths, and to practice those lessons which lie at the foundation of all religions, whether Christian, Jewish or Moslem. Of all people whom I have seen, there are none more devout than the followers of the prophet.” As he uttered this name, the Bey bowed his head, and muttered some words which were lost within his helmet.

“Well, go on,” exclaimed the maiden. “Hast thou not yet more to say in praise of the Ottoman? Are not their warriors braver, and their maidens fairer than any thou hast elsewhere seen?”

“Brave men dwell everywhere upon the earth,” replied Ali. “There are none more fearless in the army of Morad than some within yonder camp.”

“I believe it truly,” said Bertha, her face glowing. “Amurath’s best soldier is a prisoner in our camp, and he was fairly taken by one braver than he.”

“I have so heard,” answered the Bey. “Yet think not but there are better warriors than Ali Pacha in the service of the Sultan, and it may be,” he added, after a short pause, “it may be, that he will yet redeem his honor.”

“Never upon the head of him to whom he lost it.”

“Who can say if it be thus written?”

“But tell me of their maidens, for of these thou hast not yet spoken,” exclaimed Bertha, breaking the silence which followed the last words of the Moslem.

“Fair faces smile in Ederneh,” answered Ali, “and many beyond the Euxine; but the loveliest maiden mine eyes have ever looked upon dwells in this land.”

“Still better!” cried Bertha, gaily. “The fairest maidens, the bravest warriors! I shall not yet change my creed, though I think at times, Sir Knight, that in thee, I have an eloquent dervish at my side, laboring to convert me to Islamism. And how is it that thou hast come to a sight of these beau-

ties, for they are little better than prisoners as I have heard? Ah, they were but of the meaner sort, those whom thou hast seen!"

"Nay, I have been favored beyond this. I have seen faces that were fairer than the fondest picture of the imagination, and forms more perfect than the marble of the Greek."

"And still thou hast beheld Christian maidens that were more beautiful?"

"Must I not think so?" said the Bey, hesitating, while his eyes gleamed upon her through the bars of his vizor, "must I not think so, fairest lady, when I stand in thy presence and gaze upon thee? The eyes which I have seen in those lands have no lustre when compared with thine, the hue upon their cheeks is faint, while thine would shame the rose."

"I pray thee, Sir Knight, a truce to gallantry," said Bertha, blushing, her confusion showing that she was not insensible to his praise. "I will yield to yonder maidens the palm of beauty over ours and still not envy them. I have heard that they are kept caged like birds, and that neither the eye of man, nor scarcely the sun of heaven, must look upon them, while ours shun neither the one nor the other."

"Does not the rose bloom more sweetly in the garden, surrounded by its kindred flowers, then when plucked from its stem, and in the splendid vase held forth to the view of men?"

"But maidens are not roses, neither is beauty every thing, that we should be content with this alone. Give me a life more in the world, to look on when lances are broken in the tourney, to crown the victor, to follow down the dance upon the hand of a gay knight who knows how to whisper his devotion with discreet humility."

"But to wander through gardens of flowers, to rest amid gathered roses, to look on while skilful slaves touch the lute, and dance, to dip in the marble bath, where fountains cool the air around, and within the leaf-twined lattice where the light of day comes tinged with the glow of flowers, amid the singing of birds and the perfume of sweet scented shrubs, to step with hair unloosed upon the rich carpet, to sing and revel with lovely creatures, thy slaves, and to rule over all this like a queen!" Here was a crowd of new images brought to the mind of the maiden, and grouped with a warmth and coloring to which she was little accustomed. Her reply seemed to testify some displeasure, yet there was much in her manner at variance with her words, much that caused the heart of Ali Pacha to beat more quickly as he watched her.

"Thy words, Sir Unknown, sound strangely," she said, blushing. "Thus, methinks, would speak the Infidel; but not thus the gentle knight when he would please the ears of a well born maiden. Thy sojourn in Pagan lands hath marred thy courtesy. But the picture thou hast drawn of the beauties of the East, and of their luxurious life, does in no wise move me to envy them. I would breathe a freer air than that which blows through yonder gardens, though fragrant with odors of the East. To pass the hours in idleness and revel may suit the maidens thou hast described, but a nobler spirit dwells in

those of our land, a spirit that calls their thoughts into the world, away from bower and hall, to wait upon the strife and council, to urge our knights into the battle, and cry shame upon the recreant."

"The voice of woman can do much, much to steel and strengthen the bosom of a warrior; but in what tones can it speak to it like those of love? Uttered in the still close bower, they follow him across the desert, and sound in his ear amid the strife like the notes of a trumpet. It needs no more than this to move him to brave deeds. He has temples to defend, a country, and also a home where love is storing for him its best treasures. The maidens of the east think not that they need look beyond this; they mingle not in the turmoil of life; they are the wives, the mothers of warriors, and what should they wish for more? We have spoken of imprisoned birds, and roses that bloom unseen; but look, is not that a fitter emblem of thy sex?"

Bertha followed with her eye the finger of the Moslem as he pointed upward toward the heavens, and after gazing for a moment in uncertainty, beheld the pale disk of the moon, which in the clear day could scarcely be distinguished from a small and fleecy cloud. "How often," he continued, "is that sweet planet compared to woman. Her mild beauty, her soft and peaceful light, aye, her very inconstancy, are all, it is said, like you; but to my thought she never gives a truer picture of thy sex than now. View how pale are her beams when she follows too closely upon the sun; how is her splendor dimmed when she obtrudes herself upon the day! In the quiet of the night, when every sound is at rest, then does she draw her dark and golden mantle about her, and pass, like a queen, through the heavens. Then we wish for her, then we worship her with our best praise; but now, who heeds her light? Thus is it with woman. She was made to beam upon our hours of solitude, of close retirement; then has she her bright hours, then the heart does homage to her, then does she hold the sceptre, or rather, an enchanter's wand, which turns the rough ways of life into a scene of fairy land. And what lot can be better suited to her? It is not hers to wrestle for the needs of life, or to affront its dangers. Man does this, procures her safety, and then in her bower brings his finest gains to her feet. And couldst thou not," continued the Moslem, taking her hand as he spoke, "couldst thou not find happiness in such a lot? With one whose heart would be controlled by thy will, who would live but in thy smiles, couldst thou not be content to resign this freer life which thou dost prize, for one more peaceful—for one resembling somewhat that which I have described to thee?"

"For the life of a Moslem maiden, wouldst thou say, Sir Knight?" replied Bertha, withdrawing her hand from his.

"Give it what name thou wilt; it is to reign, to dwell supreme in thy beauty!" cried Ali, with an impassioned tone. He paused, he seemed at a loss for words wherewith to express what he would say, when in the midst of his hesitation his eye fell upon the old monk Antonio, who was approaching them. His steps were somewhat uncertain, and even at a good distance

it might be seen that his features were deeply flushed, and covered at the same time with smiles. The holy father was in his happiest mood. He had just arisen from the baron's table where he had not spared the wine, and now walked out along the bank of the river that the wind might cool his brow ; but without apparent success—his countenance shone like the ruby or like the fabled carbuncle.

"Thou hast come at the right time, father," exclaimed the maiden. "Thou wilt help me to convert this apostate, this Infidel."

"In truth, my daughter, thou didst seem warmly engaged with him," replied Antonio. "But what sort of infidelity is it, what sort of heresy under which he labors ? Believes he not in thy beauty, in the brightness of thine eyes, or in what other article of faith does he doubt ?"

"In none of these, if his words may be trusted," answered Bertha, glancing with a smile at the Bey. "Alas, it is far worse. Look at him, holy father, observe him well. There he stands wearing the armor of a knight, and so far as outward show may reach, a good and loyal one as ever raised a lance for beauty. And wilt thou credit it ? he is in heart no Christian, but a very Pagan, a Moslem."

"In heart, sayst thou ? Thou hast sharp eyes, forsooth ; but I would fain know by what art they can read thus deeply ?"

"Nay, I judge him by his own words," said the maiden. "He has been much in Pagan lands, has seen the magnificence and beauty that abounds therein, and says, and will have it so, that all is better there than here with us—that the Turkish maidens are happier than ours—that—"

"I see, I see," interrupted the monk, "weighty, grievous errors ! Use thy best gifts, my daughter, to turn him from his blindness."

"Nay, if thou hadst heard all, thou wouldst not deem it so light a matter. If thou hadst heard his praises of the Turkish Sultan, of Amurath or Morad, for so he names him, if thou hadst heard him laud his honor, justice and benevolence, as if these virtues were unknown with us—nay, even his piety—"

"Piety ! sayst thou ?" cried the monk, with uplifted hands, "what a word is that ! The piety of Amurath ! Maledictum ! accursed be his very name. But it was a jest, oh yes, a jest—he was but trifling with thy credulity. He knows how maidens are. They listen and wonder, and the greater the wonder, so much the readier their belief."

"He seemed in earnest, nevertheless," was the reply. "He spoke of the mosques which he had built, the schools for the instruction of the faithful ; nay, he did not scruple to assert that in devotion and religious observance, the Mahometans excel all other people that he has known."

"A Christian knight, and thus bound in the chains of the adversary !" exclaimed the old man. "Yet it was to be feared. I might have guessed it from his heathenish vow concerning wine. One evil is but the step to another, for so are we formed by nature. Truly, the power of Satan is great over this unhappy knight. I will exercise—nay, but first interrogate." Upon



this father Antonio proceeded with great earnestness to propound various questions to the knight concerning grave points of faith and doctrine. But the young Moslem scarce listened to his words. His mind was tuned to a different key. For him nature had put on all her charms, a new light seemed to have arisen upon his soul, which cast its radiance over all things around him. The trees were tinged with a deeper green, the blue heaven seemed to bend itself more nobly as he stood with her beneath it, the earth lifted him from its bosom; love and hope were in his heart, and many colored fantasies flashed across his brain.

Father Antonio gazed with evident uneasiness upon the dark and silent form that stood beside him. It was plain to him that here was a great mystery. He took courage, however, drew nearer to him, and placing his hand upon his arm, to arouse him from his reverie, said: "Thou dost not answer me, my son. Dost thou not believe that this Pagan monarch, and all such as he, from the highest to the lowest, will perish, forever perish, and pass their eternity in fire?"

"Nay, disturb me not in my thoughts, good father," replied the Moslem: "They are turned upon a different theme, one far more pleasing."

"More pleasing, doubtless, but not more weighty, more edifying. Thou dost evade me, my son. But wilt thou not answer, wilt thou not speak openly that I may know thy secret thoughts? Will they not all perish?"

"Believe me, most holy father, to think this would fill me with grief and pain."

"Pain when the enemies of heaven perish! This is a weakness of the flesh. I find no authority in our church's canons for such a weakness."

"Still I will hope that even such as these may find their way over that narrow bridge which crosses the gulf of perdition."

"A bridge!" exclaimed father Antonio in great amazement. "Where dost thou find authority for a bridge? There is a gate, indeed, but no bridge. But it is compassion more than anger that moves me. Yea, thou dost excite my pity with thy bridge. One word more, child of error. Dost thou not curse in thy heart the impostor of Mecca, and all—"

"Dog of Giaour! dost thou blaspheme?" exclaimed the Moslem in his own tongue, turning suddenly upon the startled monk.

"Ah, what mystery is here?" cried Antonio, his face becoming pale with affright. "Let us flee, my child. *Ile diabolus est*; that is to say—let us flee quickly." The old man waited to say no more, but turning suddenly, started with great speed towards the castle. "Yet I may not leave the maiden," he cried, and stopped suddenly in great perplexity as he saw that she did not follow him. "I may not leave her with the adversary." With these words he returned, drew near to her, grasped her by the hand, and endeavored to draw her onward with him.

Bertha, however, did not take the matter so seriously. She suffered herself to be led onward at first, laughing gaily as if pleased with the jest, and

impeding the progress of Antonio in no slight degree. Presently she turned to look after her companion, but he was no longer to be seen. Lost in the pleasant thoughts which busied him, and cursing in his heart the disturber of his happiness, he had turned aside from the path, and was now hidden from view by the surrounding forest.

Bertha did not fail to call Antonio's attention to his sudden disappearance, and then with an exclamation of terror, yielding apparently to her fears, she hurried forward with all her speed.

"Truly, our peril is great!" cried the monk, panting and laboring on his way. "But praised be the saints we run with swiftness. Oh, this is the way with the adversary—he wanders—wanders about I say—sometimes a roaring lion—sometimes a wolf in sheep's clothing. Bethink thee of some prayer—for me it is altogether impossible. Yet, I pray my wind may hold for yet a little space. Ha, that was a good stretch—we are here in the strong tower—the place of refuge."

The warder upon the tower saw them coming, and descending, told it to the menials; these told it to the men at arms and grooms, from these it spread to the maids, until it came at last to the baron himself, so that all the inmates of the castle were assembled upon the battlements to witness the sight.

"In the name of heaven, what is it drives thee thus?" cried the baron, calling to the monk, as he arrived at full speed at the gateway.

"The enemy! the enemy!" said Antonio, and then rushed desperately in at the gate. "That was an escape, my daughter. "Oh, thou didst run with swiftness, but for me my foot had almost slipped."

"The enemy—it cannot be," said Von Arnheim, as he descended to receive them, "but I remember yonder knight spoke of danger from the Moslem. Where is this enemy thou dost speak of, good father?" he cried, when he had gained the court yard.

"Three bow shots distant."

"It is impossible! marching this way?"

"No, lurking around."

"Hallo, throw up the drawbridge—let the men get to their arms—yet it is past belief—and hark thee," he continued, addressing a menial "saddle two steeds—"

"A horse is a vain thing for safety," cried Antonio, "neither shall he deliver any by reason of his great strength."

"I will place good riders on them, holy father. By St. Stephen, it must be looked to."

"Trust neither in horses nor in riders—but in me thou mayst put some trust. It is the enemy of souls." With these words the monk drew a breviary from his pocket, and began to rehearse therefrom with great earnestness and volubility.

The baron turned to his daughter in wonder, and it needed but a glance at

her laughing face to read an explanation of the whole adventure. "Our guest!" exclaimed the old man.

"Aye, our guest," cried Bertha.

"Our unknown guest!" reiterated the baron.

"Aye, but unknown no longer," said the monk, "discovered, unmasked, by my humble efforts. And was it not strangely ordered by heaven? Here did we, the noble baron and I, moved by certain suspicious and heathenish peculiarities of this stranger, refuse him all friendly and familiar intercourse. Yet we thought not upon the maiden, but left her so much the more exposed to his devilish wiles. Well, I walk forth thinking of anything rather than this, but doubtless inspired thereto, moved by some angel that watches over her, and come upon her while they are closely engaged; truth and error, light and darkness, and if I mistake not he had already laid hands upon the damsel."

"Ha! sayest thou so?" interrupted Von Arnheim.

"Aye, truly," answered the monk, "and who knows what mischief he might have worked had not my presence been thus timely."

"Who knows, in good sooth?" said the baron.

"Nay, I have no great fears," said Bertha, banishing the blush which glowed upon her cheek. "For any danger I have run with this adversary I should not fear it, even without thy aid, good father."

"Dost thou trust so much to thyself?" said Antonio. "Yet in a righteous cause, even the weakest, even thou, my daughter, may bear away the victory."

"Yet it is the part of prudence to run no hazard, above all, with an unknown enemy," said the baron, turning to his daughter with a look of meaning. "But come, good father, let us take counsel of the matter by ourselves." Bertha did not follow them, but remained pondering upon what had passed. The word enemy sounded again and again in her ears, yet she could not rightly understand how the stranger knight should be her enemy. His sadness, his quiet, noble demeanor, and the singular interest which his words possessed for her seemed to move her rather to friendliness and sympathy. There was nothing in his speech or bearing that evinced hostility or inspired fear, and she was not of so timid a nature as to shrink from imaginary danger. It required but little reflection; her resolution was easily taken; she would leave it to time and accident to disclose the nature of the peril which threatened her, trusting the while to her own courage, or to the good aid of that guardian angel, which, as father Antonio had declared, was busy in keeping watch over her.

## CHAPTER XI.

## PLOTTINGS.

In the mean while there was much confusion in the Christian camp. The truce had been revoked, and all were busily engaged in preparations for the approaching war. The escape of the Turkish prisoner, whose arrest had been decreed by the council, had foiled the purposes of the cardinal, and his anger was without bounds. Most of the nobles and chiefs of the army shared in his disappointment, the pride also of the king was wounded, for he felt that his authority had been contemned, although in his cooler moments he could not deny to himself that by this occurrence they were spared an act which bore the semblance of much wrong. During the first few days after this event, Juliani was active in advising and urging on such measures as might lead to the recapture of the prisoner. Bands of mounted horsemen were despatched in every direction which it might be supposed the Turk had taken in his flight, messages were sent to the towns and fortresses along the Danube, and on the southern borders of the kingdom, bearing word of his escape, the passes were watched with the utmost vigilance, and no means left untried to intercept the fugitive.

While the result of these efforts was as yet uncertain, the cardinal spared no pains to animate the hopes and exertions of those around him. He mingled freely with the nobles, was cheerful and affable with those who sought his presence, and gained great favor with all, even with the common soldiers, to whom he often vouchsafed a word as he passed through the camp. But all endeavors were without effect. Day after day passed by and brought no tidings of the prisoner. Juliani seemed now to change his mood, his face put off its cheerfulness and grew sad and lowering; he became distant and reserved, held little intercourse with those around him, and it was evident to all that the holy prelate took much to heart the escape of the Turkish leader. Not many days after this event, the Earl of Cillia sought the cardinal in his tent, where he now kept himself for the most part secluded.

"Dost thou bring tidings? aught of the fugitives, good Cillia?" exclaimed the latter, as the earl entered.

"Not a word—not one that promises much. It is said indeed that a Turk was seen near the Danube, not far from Semendria, and from the steed which he rode it could be no other than our man; but the hound's spur was too sharp."

"I wot well from whom comes this mischance," said the cardinal, darkly, "and trust me, it shall go ill with him for his treachery."

"Thou dost mean yonder Walachian," rejoined the earl with a grim smile. "It is a fine pass, forsooth, that things have come to with us, when such a one, a stranger among us, may take it upon him to thwart our purposes."

"The evil must be mended, right speedily mended, my lord earl. Oh, I will crush the upstart down into the dust, into the mire from which he sprang."

"By St. Stephen, I should not grieve to see his fine wings clipped. My aid thou shalt have in it. Yet hold not the task too light."

"Heaven and hell!" cried Juliani impatiently, "how often must I hear this?" A single knight stands in my path, poor, nameless. I would remove him thence, and a thousand voices cry out beware, as though the devil stood in his harness. What is he that I should fear him? or thou, noble earl, why shouldst thou stand thus in dread of him?"

"The fiend catch my soul! Sir Cardinal, coin no words at my mint. I said nothing of fear. I pointed at caution. Nameless and landless as he stands, yet has he stout friends among the chiefs. The Waivode of Transylvania is his feudal lord, and and Moritz Von Arnheim, whose life it is said he saved at Istatu, will not stand by idle, and see him come to harm. The king himself likewise looks with favor on him.

"Nay, thou art too faint hearted, noble Cillia," replied the prelate. "John of Transylvania has, like the rest, but a single voice in the council; Von Arnheim is scarce yet healed of his wounds; and if wine can bring him harm, the leech has ere this his work to do again. For the king's countenance," he added, smiling significantly, "thou knowest the favor of princes is not unchanging."

"God speed thy purpose, my lord cardinal," rejoined the earl. "God speed it I say. If thou canst weave aught against him, thou mayst count upon my help to thrust him in the snare."

"What should I weave against him, noble earl? Has he not spread the snare for himself in aiding the flight of these prisoners?"

"Aye, if it can be shown against him," replied the earl, "but as yet there rests barely in suspicion."

"I cannot believe that he will deny the charge and clear himself by oath, if indeed he be guilty."

"It may be that he would scruple at this. Well, let the trial be made against him. Let him be accused of treason, no less—"

"And contempt of the authority of the council," added Juliani. "This has been done already, my lord earl. He will be heard in his defence in presence of the king, and a few chiefs whom I have taken care to advise."

"How, if he demand the combat?"

"There is doubtless more than one good knight among us who will be found ready to espouse so just a quarrel."

"There will be no lack of them, I think."

"It might be that thou thyself wouldst meet him, Cillia?"

"If needs be, I would meet him," replied the earl, gloomily. "Yet I would not that it should come to this."

"Is he so good a knight,?" asked the cardinal, scornfully.

"He is a good knight," answered the earl, not heeding the tone in which these words were spoken.

"Is he indeed so brave and skilful?"

"Aye, he is brave—it cannot be denied of him," said the earl, whose thoughts seemed buried with himself. "He is brave as all his race have been."

"How sayst thou? his race! What know'st thou of his race, my lord?"

"The fiend seize me! I said it not—or—well—is he not a Walachian?"

"Nay, good, my lord earl, never seek to evade me after this fashion. Every thing must deceive me, or thou dost know more of this knight. Dost know of his name or lineage?"

"I find his features not altogether new to me," replied the earl. "We have met before, I doubt not, though where or when does not remain in my memory."

"Hast thou no guess at his lineage? whether it be noble or ignoble?"

"His parents were Italian, and of rank, if it be the same—or his father ather—his mother was of Bohemia or Hungary."

"And his name, noble earl?" exclaimed the cardinal.

"His name—his name!" repeated the earl slowly, as if endeavoring to recall it, glancing stealthily from beneath his heavy brows upon the eyes of Juliani, which were fastened upon his own. "Beshrew these wars! they fairly bewilder a poor knight's brain. I can not rightly bring it to mind."

"I would thou couldst name to me his name!" said the legate, earnestly.

"Nay, what is his name to us?" cried the earl, rising from his seat, and crossing to the opposite side of the tent. "It is the man himself that we seek. Be it ours to crush him! For, believe me, my lord cardinal, let his name or lineage be what it may, he is a curse to me while he cumbers the earth."

"How warmly dost thou speak, Sir Earl," said the legate, eyeing him closely. "I read in thy words something more than common enmity. Confess thou hast some deep-rooted cause for hatred towards this Walachian, as he is called. He has crossed thy path in love! Ha, he stands high in favor with the fair Bertha! Something I have seen of smiles and soft glances."

"Nay, it is labor lost with him," replied the earl. "The maiden herself has pride enough to keep her fancies within due bounds, and the father is of the old Magyar stock, and would ill like to match his daughter with a stranger."

"But he is young, has a goodly mien, and is bold and knight-like withal, as thou dost say. All know what weight these have with a maiden's fancy. With the father, the service he rendered at Istatu may go far to move the old knight in his behalf."

"I care not if it should. I think not of her—I would not quarrel with him for the love of a paltry girl."

As he said this, he rang a small bell, when a page made his appearance. "Let Jarno see to the saddling of my horse, and tell the young Marquis Di Rimini, that within an hour I will ride with him into the city."

The page retired. Juliani then opened an *escritoire*, took from it some papers and materials for writing, and was soon busily engaged. The folds upon his brow gradually grew smoother, his eye regained its vivacity, and it was evident that his employment was fast banishing his uneasiness. It needed only an occasional draught of the rich wine, which stood near him, to restore him fully to himself; and, when the hour was up, and Di Rimini waited for him without, he went forth to meet him, with a face smiling and unruffled.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE WHITE KNIGHT.

In the mean while, the young knight who was thus threatened, was not free from forebodings. He had no distinct fears—no suspicion, indeed, of the danger which his enemies were preparing for him; but he knew their malice and their power, and looked every moment for some manifestation of their hostility. He felt, in truth, that he had placed himself within their reach. The part which he had borne in the liberation of the Osmanli had been taken in direct defiance of the decision of the council, and, if proved against him, might subject him to disgrace and heavy punishment. Yet he did not regret this act: no—to reflect upon it, filled him with a proud and noble emotion—a confidence in himself, that he had done what honor demanded of him, and that he was ready to meet the peril which might result from it. They were other thoughts which disturbed him.

It was the sixth day after the departure of his prisoner, that he stood in front of his tent, looking upon the scene before him. The morning was well advanced towards noon, and the camp presented a gay and busy spectacle. Men-at-arms were seen hurrying to and fro, and horsemen speeding across the plain, now lost behind the intervening tents, and now emerging into view, as they spurred farther along the intricacies of the encampment. The preparations for the approaching war had given life and activity to all around. Yet it could not be said that the eyes of the young knight were attracted by this spectacle—at least, it did not seem to animate him. The martial display and pomp that stirred before him appeared to call up no ardor in his bosom; his eye did not brighten, nor his cheek glow, as a warrior's should, when he views his comrades gathering for the battle. On the contrary, his face was marked with sadness and anxiety. After a long silence, he heaved a deep sigh, and exclaimed: "It is thus, then, that this war commences! thus, in

treachery and deceit! What issue can be hoped for, except defeat and ignominy? After so glorious a campaign, in which, like brave knights, we have bridled the rage of the Osmanli, now to try the trick of the bandit and assassin! I believe it will not prosper with us. For mine own private interests, too, this war comes most untimely. Now, when I have gained that rank and weight in the army, that favor with the king and nobles, which would aid me to discover and obtain my rights—and when peace gave time for this! I am not what I seem. I feel, I know that I am more than a landless knight, without inheritance or noble fathers, with the sword for my only birthright. Though a Walachian by name and repute, yet my heart tells me that here, here is my country. And not my heart alone. Strange words have fallen of late from my old servant, the faithful Johann, which bid me dare to hope, that I may claim rank among the foremost in Hungary. Then, Bertha, I need not blush to offer thee this hand. Oh, thou mistress of my soul, thou wouldst not spurn it even now. Though thy lips have been silent, and mine, mine also silent of love, yet thine every look and motion gives me this hope, which is now the aim and leading star of my existence. But the custom of the world will have it so; equal must match with equal. Without name or fortune, I have raised myself by mine own arm, to a goodly height, and there is pride in the thought. But happy is he who can look back upon a line of ancestors, and know that they also were knightlike and renowned. How inspiring to say:—‘Here fell my grandsire, in the thickest of the fight, his name unstained—peace to his memory!’ or, ‘here my father led a good band to victory.’ One is thus hedged in from dishonor. Behind him, the sires whom he would not shame—and, before him, his children, to whom he would leave a spotless inheritance.” The young knight here paused—a tear glanced in his eye,—his lip trembled, and he seemed to hang in silence over the picture which he had just presented to himself. In a moment, however, his countenance drooped, and he said, in a sad tone: “But this is not mine—as yet it is not mine, though, heaven be praised, I am not without some hopes. But why is not Johann returned? He has tarried long beyond the time. Can any evil have befallen him? By heaven, this is a new feeling, this loneliness, this sorrow. Ali Pacha, too, is gone—may God convert his soul to Christ. He has become dearer to me than I would have believed. A blow, also, is pending over me from yonder prelate, who, though scarce ten days in the camp, has already half the power of the kingdom in his hands. Even the king bends to him, and smiles not upon me as he once did. But I will place a bold breast against the storm. Huniades, too, seems estranged from me. As I passed him yesterday, he went by without friendly greeting, or staying me, as is his wont, to hear what news the day bears. Yet, let me not wrong him. He is brave and noble,—and the unfortunate are ever suspicious.”

“Who speaks of Huniades?” said a clear and manly voice near him.

The Walachian started, turned, and beheld the White Knight standing at



his side. "Pardon me, my lord," he said, with some hesitation; "I knew not that I uttered my thoughts aloud, neither that thou wast thus near."

"Thou didst me no wrong, I hope, even in thy thoughts. Ha! Silent, Sir Knight! I will wager, now, this white casque against thy black one, that I will guess thy suspicions. Was it not yesterday that I passed thee with the king?"

The young knight nodded assent.

"I rode by thee then with no form of courtesy, a manner that, in ordinary times, would not need an excuse, that haste or press of business might easily account for. And now, in a suspicious mood, thou dost put a color upon it that it will not bear, and dost think and say to thyself—'he, too, is growing hostile to me.' Well! have I not guessed it?"

"I will confess, my lord, thy manner of yesterday fell heavily upon me. My mind was ill at ease,—disturbed somewhat by this business of the prisoners, and other matters which thou know'st not of. Pardon me, then—"

"Nay," cried Huniades, interrupting him, "it is an offence not so easily answered for, that—'pardon me, my lord,' or, 'let this be my excuse,' will suffice to make all good again. When hast thou ever known me to desert a friend or follower at a pinch?"

"Never, my lord, in good sooth, never," replied the knight, casting his eyes to the ground.

"In need, never," continued Huniades. "Some, indeed, have grown presumptuous, have plumed themselves over much upon past services—such I leave to their own bent; I let such go whither they will. Well, and if I desert not my friends, neither do I thrust myself heedlessly into their quarrels, when to do thus would bring them no help, but rather injury. Here rode I yesterday with the king, whilst thou camest spurring over the plain, as if thou wast lord and master. True, thou didst think of no such matter, and kept on at a more becoming pace as we drew nearer. Then says his majesty; 'a good knight is this that comes yonder.' 'A good, knight, my liege,' I replied, and nothing further, being better pleased that he should praise thee than I myself. 'What pity is it that to his bravery he joins such presumption,' were the next words. At this we passed, and his majesty did not deign to look upon thee—he who is commonly so affable. I took my lesson from him, turned my face, and rode on—for, such is the nature of man, had I defended thee warmly, or passed thee with courteous greeting, what then had the king said? 'Ha! Huniades, dost thou take part with this traitor?'—or whatever term had come most readily to his royal tongue. Then am I set down as thy patron and defender, and, let me say what I will in thy behalf, all remains without effect. No;—let the hour come, Sir Knight, when, with head or hand, I can keep thee upright, and see if I then fail."

"Pardon me, my most noble lord," exclaimed the Walachian, seizing his armed hand, and pressing it to his lips. "Thou wast ever wise as brave."

"Why should I not, with a good weight of hand, bear likewise some ounces

of brain within my headpiece? I should hardly else hold my way in the world, where the devils of cunning, envy, and ambition are striving for the high places, and backed often by a fiend-like courage. And it grows upon me. At thy age, with head enough, a clear eye, and a strong hand, I thought of nothing but action: farther along in life, I saw that forethought and prudence were no bad companions to valor, and now my prudence has become policy. Aye, so it is—I pray God the times make not a knave of me. And when I fear it, I take spear in hand and ride forth, if it be only to strike a boar, and, in action, bring back my youth again. Thus it runs in life, boy; and if hereafter thou shouldst hear that John of Transylvania has done this or that to advance the honor of his name, and the world applauds and cries out, ‘oh, rare policy!’ and thou canst not admire with the rest, be not perplexed or disturbed in thy belief. Let them cry as they will, but do thou sigh and say, ‘the times have made him like other men.’”

“I vow to God and our Lady of mercy,” exclaimed the young knight, with ardor, for he was moved by the sadness with which these words were spoken, “that, let the deed be what it may which John Huniades, my feudal lord, in his sound mind, may deem fit to do, I will uphold it as good, just, and knight-like, and venture my best blood in the quarrel.”

“Thanks, thanks, for thy youthful confidence!” was the reply. “God grant thou may’st never wish that oath unsworn. But let us turn to nearer matters. The birds that have flown cannot then be retaken. All efforts at pursuit have, as it seems, proved fruitless.”

“Well, I do not so far wear a mask upon my feelings as to say that I grieve for it.”

“I grieve not for it,” answered Huniades; “and yet, for all this, I will wear a mask too thick for the eyes of yonder priest to penetrate. And it were well for thee to do this also, for the business shows a doubtful face. Thou hast been charged with treason, and, at the instigation of the cardinal, will be sent for, ere long, to answer the accusation.”

“I have looked for this, my lord,” replied the Walachian, without emotion. “But what can they make of it? The prisoners are gone, forsooth, yet they know as little how as whither.”

“They can fasten nothing upon thee, if thou art prudent and wary,” said the Waivode. “If questioned as to thy part in their escape, answer not, or answer indirectly; but declare thyself in high terms innocent of all treachery and faithlessness. Thou wilt leave it thus to thine accusers to prove the deed against thee.”

“And how, if any push the matter so far as to charge me outright with treason?”

“Then thou wilt—”

“Demand the combat—appeal my cause to heaven,” cried the young knight, quickly.

“Doubtless. In this way thou art a right skilful advocate, and I fear not for the issue.”

"Who will likely answer me?"

"Oh, there will be enough," was the reply. "The Earl of Cillia, or the Italian, Di Rimini; for both seem given, heart and soul, to the cardinal."

"The latter, I should hold it, but sport to encounter," said the Walachian, in a tone of scorn; "and for the earl," he added, while his eyes gleamed with fire, "I would give the booty of a well-fought campaign to meet him where none could separate us."

"How, art thou so incensed against him?" exclaimed Huniades, in wonder. "I knew not that thou hadst suffered wrong at his hands."

"My wrongs have passed from my remembrance," replied the knight. "The hatred—the hatred sits here. I know not wherefore; it has outlived the memory of its cause."

"Runs there such a taste of bitterness in thy young, untroubled blood?"

"Untroubled! say'st thou, my lord? Yet, in good sooth, I cannot rehearse my troubles to thee. They, also, as I well believe, are for the most part unknown to me."

"Thou dost speak in riddles, and I will not tarry to solve them," cried Huniades, smiling. "Farewell! Within an hour, if I err not, thou wilt be summoned to the king. Bear thyself well. Above all, do not give way to anger. Be calm and temperate, lest on some point thine enemies gain advantage over thee."

"Thanks for thy caution," said the young knight, grasping his hand ere he departed. "I will abide the scrutiny of his majesty with the same courage with which I have fought for his crown; others, I am not bound to answer. Farewell!"

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SENTENCE.

HUNIADES had not judged amiss. Ere an hour had passed, the young knight was summoned to appear before the king. He followed the messenger in silence to the royal pavilion, entered, and found himself in the presence of his sovereign. Near him sat the cardinal, and around stood various lords, among whom he observed the Earl of Cillia, the young Italian, and others whom he deemed, for the most part, unfriendly to him. Huniades was there with the rest, but he did not greet him. He stood apart, and gave no sign by which it might be known that he was aware of his presence. "Thou art sent for, Sir Knight, to answer to a grave charge," said the king, turning to him when he had entered, "one which concerns nearly thy knightly honor and thy loyalty."

"I am bound, my most gracious sovereign, to answer touching matters of such import, to all which your majesty may demand of his faithful subject."

The brows of the cardinal were knit closely together, for the words "your majesty" were uttered with a marked emphasis. His reply, however, was prevented by the king. "We had been better pleased," said Ladislaus, with some severity of manner, "to witness proofs of thy loyalty in deeds, rather than in words. Some days since, as is well known, thou hadst in thy keeping, prisoners, one of whom was of no slight value. They have escaped. We would know from thee in how far thou hast permitted or aided their flight."

"Nay, may it please your majesty, I had no prisoners. Guests had I that were free to come and go at will, as it best suited their own pleasure."

"Give them what name thou wilt," exclaimed the king, quickly, "their flight is laid to thy charge, and we look that thou shouldst answer it."

"I pray your majesty, hold me not to answer for those over whom I had no control. It must needs be remembered that those Moslems, some time my prisoners, were declared free by treaty, were held to ransom, and that I had no right, no pretext, to place the slightest bar upon their liberty."

"Listen to him!" cried the legate, scornfully. "He sits in judgment upon the council. Yet this is but a subterfuge. If by a council of Christian Chiefs, those prisoners were declared free, by a council also, guided and enlightened by the holy church, they were restored to their captivity. This passes for nothing."

The blood rushed to the brow of the Walachian, but he did not reply. Turning to the king with a manner which his well governed anger had not divested of self possession, but rather rendered earnest and lofty, he said: "I crave this grace at the hands of my sovereign; if I am accused of aught disloyal or unworthy, let the proofs be offered, that I may meet them, that I may speak in my defence. If I am charged therewith upon the bare suspicion of an enemy, from private malice or open hatred, I appeal my cause to God, who will judge the right. I will meet my accuser in the lists. Let him be placed before me."

"Thou dost see him here," said the cardinal, fastening his dark eyes upon him; "and it does well become thee, stranger in this land, to assume that tone among those for whom thou art no peer. Thou hast mingled thyself in matters above thy station, hast set at nought the will of those to whom thou dost owe submission. And now, forsooth, because there may be no witness of thy guilt, thou dost wear a bold front, and dost appeal to God in behalf of thy innocence!"

"I stand here, lord cardinal," answered the knight, trembling with anger, "I stand here in a most noble presence, and the reply which thine injurious words had else drawn from me, is checked ere it finds utterance. There are some here of high rank, who best know how far I have merited this scorn, or if aught of guilt has hitherto been coupled with my name. If I deserve re-

proof that I am no Hungarian, it little becomes thee, at least, to utter it.— There is as little grace, also, as risk, when one shielded by those robes speak such things against me, which, should a knight and an equal dare so much as to breathe, he should receive such chastisement as this right arm could render.”

“This to me!” cried the cardinal, in anger which he was unable to control.— “Now, by mine holy office, this passes endurance, traitorous, injurious slave!”

“That tongue speaks falsely that terms me thus,” exclaimed the Walachian, giving way at last to the indignation which boiled within him. “I am no traitor, speak no injuries—and, least of all, am I a slave. I reverence thine office, and may not raise hand against one who wears thy garb; but if there be belted knight in this presence, who will assert what thou hast dared to say, or in the matter of these prisoners will charge me with aught treasonable or unworthy, by mine honor, he lies, and I bid him defiance. With this body in the lists will I prove it, knight-like will I prove it, on horseback or on foot, with sword and lance, or with steel battle axe.”

The young knight looked around the circle with a clear, bold glance as he uttered these words, and before they were well ended, he had ungloved his right hand and cast his gauntlet at the feet of the legate. Scarce an instant passed ere three knights of those who were present, stepped forward to raise the gage of combat. Ulric of Cillia was foremost. He lifted the glove from the ground, cast down his own in answer to it, and swore, by the fiend, that he held the Walachian to be little better than a traitor, and that he would prove what he said to be true in the lists. The two others were Di Rimini and a Polish baron, named Larenski. They also cast down their gauntlets, and in different words declared the accused guilty of treason.

“The gage of combat is complete,” cried the king. “What would ye more, worthy knights?”

“Nay, let them all come! I would meet a host in such a cause,” cried the Walachian, and taking the glove from his left hand, he cast it upon the ground before the Italian. He then turned to Huniades, who was now at his side, and said, “Thy glove, my most noble lord, but for a moment, to answer yon beetle-browed baron.”

“Nay, by St. Stephen,” exclaimed the good knight, “my glove shall be thrust into no man’s quarrel, unless my hand go with it.” Then stepping forward, he raised the gauntlet of Larenski, and said, throwing his own at his feet, “I, John of Transylvania, uphold the accused to be a knight true and loyal, and free from all stain of treason, and will prove it with this poor body in the lists.” This interference, so sudden and unexpected, filled all present with surprise. There was silence for a moment, and the different emotions which animated those around, were pictured in the varied expression of their features. Upon those of Ladislaus sat simple wonder, but the brow of the cardinal lowered with anger and vexation, while the mien of the young knight became loftier, and his cheek glowed as if with pride, at find-

ing by his side, an ally so noble and stainless. The voice of Juliani broke the silence. "I take blame to myself that I have suffered this matter to proceed thus far," he said, turning to the king; "the peace of the holy church forbids that this quarrel be fought out; forbids that knights who are banded together in her defence, should turn their swords against each other."

"How is it, my lord cardinal, that thy memory was thus slow in the matter?" inquired Huniades, fixing his eyes upon the prelate. "While the accused stood alone, the combat was right and lawful enough, forsooth. We heard no word then of this peace of the holy church."

"It cannot be denied, good Huniades, that I deserve this reproof at thy hands," rejoined the cardinal. "For a while it had escaped me until the chief and leader of this host stooped from his place to thrust his sword into a private quarrel."

"By St. Mary, but thou dost owe me thanks then, worthy father," replied the Waivode, scornfully; "thou mightst otherwise even altogether have forgotten this peace of the church, which thou dost deem of such weight."

The eyes of the legate flashed fire, and he compressed his lip tightly between his teeth to check the angry reply that was struggling for utterance. He then cast his looks for a moment upon the ground, as if in thought, and thereupon turned to the king, and said, in a calm tone, "I pray your majesty, command yonder knights each to restore his gage of combat."

"And how, then, to proceed farther against the accused?" asked Ladislaus. "Or shall we e'en let him go unpunished, bating only something of the favor which we owe him for past services?"

"Not so, by my faith," replied the cardinal; "it were shame to our authority. Has heaven no other way by which it may vouchsafe to show us the truth? Thou dost stand before us, Sir Knight, charged with treason and disobedience. Thou hast declared thine innocence, and appealed thy cause to heaven. Thou dost wear a bold, unwavering front, but the dark suspicions which rest upon thee, thou canst gainsay by words alone; nor this, indeed, distinctly and without evasion. Thou hast not yet denied that thou didst bear part in the escape of yonder prisoners, but dost declare simply that thou art guiltless of aught ignoble or disloyal. Well, hast thou such confidence in the goodness of thy cause that thou wilt submit thyself to the judgment of heaven as prepared for thee by the wisdom of thy superiors?"

"I am innocent, before God, of all disloyalty," replied the Walachian, struggling to be calm, "and will submit to whatever trial his majesty may in his goodness judge fitting—so it bring no dishonor to me as a knight and a soldier."

"Let the ordeal of fire be substituted for this of arms," said the legate, turning to the king.

"Thou hast heard, Sir Knight," said Ladislaus. "There is a way yet left thee to redeem thy fame, and to regain our favor as of old. Art thou so sure of thy innocence that thou wilt submit thyself to this dread trial?"

"As I have said no shadow of treason rests upon my soul, and upon that issue, I resign myself to the will of my sovereign."

"Say nay! refuse it, boy!" cried Huniades, in an under tone, yet so loud that it was heard by all around. "Battle it gaily with cold steel, but keep thy hand from molten lead or red hot iron."

"Nay, let them order it as they will," said the knight, with an uncertain, anxious manner. "I must keep mine honor unsullied, and the king's favor and countenance are of much—much moment to me."

"Be it so, then," resumed the king. "Let each knight return his gage of combat, and let the words of defiance which have passed, be forgotten—be as if unspoken. And do thou," he added, turning to the accused, "prepare thyself and be in readiness for this ordeal, the time and manner of which shall be soon declared to thee."

"As it is needful that the accused be put in durance," said the cardinal, "in whose keeping can he be better placed than in that of the noble Earl of Cillia?"

"It were hardly, I trow, the part of wisdom," said the Waivode. "The issue of this day's deliberation will, of itself, go near to make mischief among his wild followers. To know he is in the hands of one they think his enemy might stir them to open mutiny."

"Thou art right," rejoined the king; "and that all may know our lenity, we place him in thy keeping, good Huniades, who assuredly art not his enemy. Thou wilt become sponsor and surety for him."

"I pray, your majesty," said the Walachian, "that the time of this ordeal be deferred no longer than is most needful. My limbs are little used to rest, and will stiffen and grow useless under long restraint. And as I am to be held a prisoner, let it not be without freedom to those, if there are any such, who still hold me dear, to visit me at times, and comfort me with their advice and sympathy."

"Thy wish in this is granted. Huniades shall take order for it." With these words, the king signed to him to retire, and, accompanied by Huniades, he left the royal presence.

"Thou hast made goodly work of it," said the Waivode, looking reproachfully and yet sadly upon him, when they had come into the open air. "What madness seized thee, that thou shouldst yield thyself to this strange hazard?"

"What choice had I, my good lord?" replied the Walachian. "They would have refused me the combat, and thou knowest I am not altogether guiltless of aiding in the escape of—"

"Heaven and earth! Thou shouldst not have ceased to avouch thy innocence, and to declare thyself ready to prove it in arms. If this were disallowed thee, let thine accuser proceed against thee as he best might."

"And so had I lost the favor of our good king, upon which hangs more—more than thou dost wot of, Huniades. Yet I confess I was somewhat moved by passion. But it is passed—let us speak no more of it. And I pray thee

my lord, send to-night a trusty messenger to the castle of Moritz Von Arnheim. Let him not speak of what has befallen me, but if there be a knight there who sojourns with him, let him say to him, from me, that there is war between the Christian and the Moslem, and his country has instant need of him."

"Ha! has the bird perched so near, then?" cried Huniades, glancing quickly upon him; "yet answer me not—I would know nothing of it. I will send the messenger as thou desirest," he added, and then muttered to himself, "by heaven, he shall know all that has come of it, and if he be a true man—yet it will not help, it will not help." With this, they continued their way through the encampment, at times silent, and at times speaking of those things which most nearly concerned them.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### A MOSLEM'S WOOLING.

ON the evening of the imprisonment of the Walachian, Bertna, unconscious of the danger which threatened him, had ascended to the castle's roof, and walked with a light and careless step around the battlements. Her bosom it is true, was not altogether at ease, but her anxiety concerned herself alone—concerned her own heart, the secret recesses of which she seemed unable to penetrate. The feelings with which she regarded the unknown knight were an enigma to her. She had once known, as she thought, the import of the words love and friendship, and could define with sufficient accuracy the bounds of either emotion, but the experience of a few days had taught her to distrust her skill. There was that in the demeanor of this stranger which moved her with a singular charm. It was not love which she felt; this thought she would not harbor, and still would she have shrunk from disclosing all the secrets of her bosom to him for whom she had long owned to herself she felt this passion. She was forced to recall past scenes as they once stood before her, and past emotions when in their strength and freshness, to convince herself of the true condition of her heart. Notwithstanding this, however, she was not altogether at ease, but to her anxiety and self-reproach, she opposed a purposed carelessness and a determination to yield herself without reserve to the pleasures which the hour, the moment, afforded. And to her gay and buoyant spirit, this conflict was not without a secret, mischievous charm.

The day had been one in autumn, not of those which sadly and fitfully bewail the dying of the year, but one in which summer returns to view again the scene which she has decked with so much beauty, but departs soon, as if



in grief at the change which even already it has suffered. The maiden had ascended to the roof of the castle to watch alone the lovely night that had fallen like a veil upon the landscape, not to hide, but to lend it a more mysterious beauty. The scene before her was a picture of Bertha's own bosom. There were nature's treasures, scattered with a prodigal hand, yet warm with the recent sun; there were stream, and wood, and field, as she well knew, who had viewed them in the clear, calm day, but now an uncertain light fell over all, and memory must give her aid to bring back those beauties which evening had covered with its perplexing shadows. As she walked onward she perceived at a little distance some one leaning and looking over the battlements. She drew nearer. It was the unknown knight. She paused, advanced again, hesitated, and in a moment heard his voice sound clear and sweet out into the night, as if chanting some melody. The language was altogether unknown to her, but the rhythm seemed evident, and from the tones, she believed it was a soft song, perhaps one of love, or of home and old remembrances. And she did not err, for the purport of the words ran somewhat as follows :

"Allah, who framed the stream and ocean's flood,  
And stars that in their orbits never tire,  
He poured within my veins this restless blood,  
Kindled the spark thy breath hath blown to fire.  
But shall this flame that burns within my soul  
Cease, when the stars shall fade and sea forget to roll?"

A sigh here interrupted him. He turned and beheld the maiden. His vizor was raised, but he closed it on being aware of her presence, yet not so quickly but that she caught a glimpse of his features. She saw that they were handsome and lofty, but sadness or anxiety appeared to throw a shade over their noble outline, and it seemed to her as if it was not now for the first time that she beheld them. The merry jest that hung upon her lips was checked, and she said with a kind voice, and with a tone in which there was more reproach than she thought, "The solitude of this castle, Sir Knight, is wearisome to thee. I know it from those sounds, although I could not tell their meaning; and there is an air of gloom about thee, that appears even through thy disguise."

"Wearisome!" re-echoed the Moslem, as if he had heard no more than this word; "yes, there is much in life that is wearisome, much in the fate that follows us, which weighs like lead upon the heart. But this castle is no solitude."

"Thou dost people it from thine own memory with forms that thou hast known and loved. Thy thoughts wander, doubtless, here in the night, to thine own home, to Italy, to Spain, or whatever be the land that claims thee." Ali shook his head, but did not reply. "Or follow the current of the river

to those maidens thou hast described to me," continued Bertha, permitting a smile to play upon her lips.

"For a moment the stream carried me with itself," rejoined the Moslem.

"I doubt me thou dost love some eastern damsel. Confess thou hast left thy heart in those lands?"

"I might have thought so once in truth," said Ali; "but how little can we trust the heart! She who now rules it dwells on Christian soil."

"But is there not here some evasion—nay, a device altogether to mislead me?" cried the maiden, laughing: "Broad lands are shadowed by the crescent where the cross should of right hold sway."

"I mean it not so indeed," he answered quickly. "But grant it were so—grant that I love a maiden of a faith different from mine, dost thou wonder then that I am sad? Find you not herein good cause for that gloom which thou hast seen in me? Or art thou so young in life as to be ignorant of the power of that passion? For what hope were there," he continued; "what expectation that a barrier like this might be removed?"

"It were the easier, most like, the wiser surely, to repress a passion that promises so ill," was the reply.

"Oh, thou dost give prudent counsel," exclaimed Ali. "But how, if I have already drunk too deeply of the sweet poison, and to die is easier than to put the cup from my lips? How, if my whole earthly happiness hangs upon the slender thread of a maiden's favor? Love is no phantom, though often held as such. There is a love which leaps into being beneath the warmth of a single glance, and dies with the occasion that gave it birth. Yet if fostered rightly it will throw a charm over many a year. But there is a love beyond this, which, from its nature, is subject to no change. Its very essence is life and progress. It grows with our being, each day lends it strength, and this existence is too short wherewith to measure its duration. Hourly it throws its fine bands, thread after thread, about the heart, twines within its inmost fibres, until every emotion, every joy and sorrow, thrills to it in perfect unison. Upon its chords does an unseen hand play the many melodies of life, and to break them jars the soul to its depths, leaves it like an instrument that hath lost its strings, untuned, discordant, or silent and irresponsible, though touched never so skilfully."

Bertha was much moved by these words, although she endeavored to answer lightly. "If the evil be so deeply seated, there seems but one remedy," she said. "Hie to the land where yonder maiden dwells, whom thou dost worship. Plead thy suit in her ears with such words as these and others which thou hast doubtless learned, win her to listen to thy love, and then bear her with thee to thy home."

"But the bars which separate us—a different faith and different customs?"

"Gain but her heart, Sir Knight, and leave the rest to follow as it will."

"Or, must I not rather yield in these?" said Ali, "and for the heart she gives me—"

"The very thought is a stain upon the honor of a good knight!" exclaimed Bertha, warmly interrupting him. "But thou dost not mean it. According to thine own words, woman was formed by nature for a quiet sphere; to follow, not to lead; to find her strength in weakness and dependence. Were I in the mood I might gainsay much of this; but in matters of such import, I grant it should be so. In these, let the maiden yield to her lover."

"Thou sayst rightly, fair lady," rejoined Ali. "Man's life is one of action, of aid or injury to all that comes within his reach, and it is of much moment that this should be in accordance with his heart. Of woman, little is looked for, save to nourish her faith in stillness. At most, she need but sin against its forms, even where she denies it. Yes, thou art right; in these things let the maiden yield to her lover. And I will try to move her to it. But her heart, her heart first, thou sayst?"

"Knows she of thy love?" asked Bertha, after a slight pause.

"If mine eyes have not told her, she knows not of it. Yet have I a token from her that I wear upon my bosom." With these words he drew from beneath his armor a silken scarf, and reached it to her.

"This!" she cried, while her face became covered with blushes as she gazed upon it. "Wast thou, then, that unknown knight who bore away the prize in yonder tournament?"

"I was that knight," replied Ali. "That day which saw me a victor in the lists, sealed me, fairest lady, a captive to thy beauty. As thou didst bend smiling over me, and didst throw this band about my neck, then love descended upon my heart with the power of destiny, and I became thine forever."

"But how sorts this with thy tale of the Infidel maiden?" said Bertha, scarcely trusting herself to ask the question.

"Oh, well, in truth, as thou shalt hear," replied the Moslem. "But let us pass onward while I find words to tell it; and every emotion of my heart all my strange fortune, shall be disclosed to thee. And for this once, since it may be the last time, I would pray thee to look upon me without distrust, and listen kindly."

As they walked slowly around the battlements, her arm resting upon his, he still remained silent; whether it were that he would not end a situation which brought him so much pleasure, or that, as he had said, he was at a loss for words wherewith to declare what he would speak. It was a lovely night. The moon, full orb'd and now high in the heavens, shed down her mild beams unbroken, unimpeded by cloud or shadowy mist, and seemed to bathe every object around with palpable, yet soft and liquid light. The river, as it hurried by, appeared flowing with the same bright element, the trees below looked of rustling silver. They saw no shadows, these lay deep beneath them; they felt only the calm radiance which enwrapt them, which made them, as it were, one with each other, and with all nature around, encompassed thus together in a common medium of beauty. The few stars that

were visible smiled upon them with happy eyes, and seemed pledges for all their host, which were unseen in the brightness of the night, that they also watched and loved them.

It was an hour to engender soft emotions, but emotions that sometimes are deceitful, that vanish with the scene, and return faintly with the happy remembrance of it. Ali still kept silence. The mildness of the night seemed to descend into his bosom, and soothe the impetuosity of his passion. Presently they paused in their steps. Bertha took her arm from his, turned from him, and looked over the battlements, her heart beating with a strange conflict of emotions. The Moslem drew backward a little to gaze upon her beautiful form. He opened his arms, as if he would clasp her to his bosom, brought them closer and closer to her; he trembled, his lips were compressed together, and he frowned and smiled alternately as he thought how slight, and yet how strong a barrier it was that kept him from that embrace. At this moment she turned, and found herself in his arms. It was for an instant only that he held her, for with a slight exclamation of alarm, she started quickly away, and hastened from him.

He made no effort to detain her, except to throw himself at her feet, saying, 'Pardon, life of my soul—thou didst mistake my purpose—a word from thee, nay, a glance, can control me. But wilt thou not listen while I plead? A captive among mine enemies, I kneel to thee for that which is worth more to me than freedom—for love, for hope. I am Ali Pacha, the Moslem leader.' With these words he removed his helmet.

"Thou! is it thou, Bey of Roumelia?" was all she was able to utter.

"Such was once my rank," replied Ali.

"And what dost thou here in this guise?" she resumed, when she had recovered from her astonishment. "Why hast thou in Christian garb sought that hospitality, that favor, which of thyself thou couldst not hope to find?"

"Not of mine own purpose am I here," he cried. "The counsel of a good knight; nay, the finger of fate was it that guided me hither when I sought a refuge from mine enemies."

"Thine enemies?"

"Aye, the Christians. They had revoked the truce, and gave the order for my imprisonment."

"If thou art in danger, flee at once, ere it be too late," said the maiden. "Hark! is not that the tramp of horses' feet?" They looked over the battlements, and beheld a horseman riding at full speed toward the castle. "Some one approaches," she added: "even now, those who seek thee may be upon thy track."

"Let them come!" he answered, gloomily, "they will find me ready and willing to confront them. If thou wilt not listen to me, I care not for life. I felt not altogether so when I first sought this dwelling, and but for safety, had not entered here. I thought then of home, somewhere, of duty, faith and loyalty, but now that I have been so long near thee, I value nothing save and

leads me to thee." She shook her head," and was about to speak, but he gave her no time. "Nay, deny me not so quickly," he exclaimed. "Let me tell thee what a love is mine. In Ederneh thou shalt reign as a queen. Thy faith—all freedom shall be thine. My rank—" at this word his face changed, he paused for a moment, and then added: "But why do I speak of rank, for what this may now be, I know not. Bound here in Hungary by thy beauty, the favor of my master may already be withdrawn from me, and I become the meanest of his slaves. Yet what price is too great to one who loves."

"Go then, exclaimed Bertha, looking compassionately upon him. "Delay no longer, but return to thy home and avert this ruin while there is time."

"And should I find my fortune unchanged?" he said, gazing in her face with an imploring look, while he drew her hand to his lips, which she suffered him unthinkingly to retain, until his kisses burned, "should I find my station the same, the favor of my master unaltered, might I not then nourish some hope?"

Bertha was not able immediately to reply. She was moved by the sad earnestness, the deep emotion with which he spoke. Presently she answered, while his soul seemed to hang upon her lips—"It cannot be, my lord. Forget that which hath passed—forget that thou hast seen and known me. Go, and fulfil thy destiny at home."

"It lies in the tomb," said Ali, in broken words. "I shall die fighting against the enemies of our faith. Yet not the less will I remember thee, and bless thee with my latest breath."

While he spoke a step was heard ascending the narrow flight of stairs which led to the roof of the castle. The Moslem hastily replaced his casque when a menial drew near, and said that the baron desired the presence of the unknown knight in the hall below.

Ali descended, followed by Bertha. They found the old man alone. He seemed disturbed, and paced the apartment with quick steps. As his guest entered, he turned towards him abruptly, and exclaimed: "A message for thee, Sir Unknown, from the camp. There is war between the Christians and the Moslems; thy country has instant need of thee. So run the words—they are sent by the Walachian, by him who—"

"I know well by whom," said Ali: "the time has come then; I must depart."

"The horseman who brought this has tidings which confirm thine. The truce has been annulled, although the Infidels will not, as thou didst say, make an inroad into the lands of the faithful."

"The Christians then will first take up arms," said Ali, coldly. "May heaven strike with the right!"

"Amen!" exclaimed the old man with emphasis, casting a keen glance upon him, "and in the next field between the powers, I trust no vow will hinder thee from being there."

"Fear me not," replied the Moslem, and then added: "Ere I say farewell, noble baron, let me give thee my thanks."

"Spare me thy thanks," rejoined the baron, in a tone of severity; nay, almost of scorn. "Listen to the rest of these tidings which I gleaned from yonder horseman, though this, it seems, should have formed no part of his message. That same knight who sends this word to thee is imprisoned, and charged with aiding the escape of a certain Moslem, who by some chance became his prisoner at Istatu. And by my faith, he asserts his innocence, and appeals his cause to heaven."

"Will he do battle with his accusers as is the custom?" asked Ali, after a short pause.

"I would it might be so," cried the baron, warmly, "but the combat has been denied him. He will be judged by the ordeal. Thou hast heard all—now depart in God's name."

The Moslem remained silent for a moment, as if uncertain what he should reply. He glanced at the baron and at Bertha, who stood pale and trembling beside him; then placed his hand upon the fastenings of his casque, as if he would remove it, saying, "I have still somewhat to do, ere I depart."

"Hold! Sir Knight, exclaimed the old man, divining his intent. "I ask not who thou art, nor thine errand here, nor thy purpose concerning yon prisoner; but know, wert thou the Bey himself, which heaven forefend, thou canst not help him now. Wert thou to go with chains about thy neck, and upon thy knees plead for his safety, it would avail nothing."

"Art thou sure of this, beyond all doubt?" asked the Moslem. "Were the Bey of Roumelia once again in the hands of his enemies, might not this purchase his release?"

"Nay, rather would it put the seal upon his guilt, and secure his condemnation. The ordeal must clear him, or nothing—nothing, I think, unless to stir the chiefs in his behalf. Therefore, trouble thyself no farther with that which thou canst not alter, but depart at once, lest some accident occur to hinder thee."

"Of what nature is this ordeal?" inquired the Bey.

"That of fire, or boiling water, rather, for so has it been decreed. From a seething cauldron he must lift a stone or globe of iron, and, I know not what priest's work beside. Should his hand be uninjured, he is declared innocent; but if it be scathed or scarred in the act, he is held as guilty, and his fate rests with the king, or whomsoever has most weight with him."

"And canst thou guess what this is like to be?"

"Death, perhaps, or grievous disgrace, which to him will be the same."

"Oh, I am most loath to depart, while the life of that good knight hangs thus in jeopardy!" exclaimed the Moslem. "But do thou, worthy baron, strive thy utmost to avert, or even delay his fate. For who can say from whence aid may come to him in his need?"

"And may God speed thee upon thy way withersoever it lead thee," said

the old man, in a milder voice. "For though I know thee not, yet I can see through thy disguise that thou dost mean nobly." Ali scarcely waited to hear these words. Bidding both a hasty farewell, he descended into the court, and having received his steed at the hand of an attendant, threw himself upon the saddle, and rode in the direction of Adrianople.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### EDERNEH.

To follow the course of our narration, we must transport the reader across that extent of country which separates Buda from Adrianople or Ederneh, the capital of the Ottoman possessions in Europe. The origin of this city ascends to the early age of the Roman Empire. It was founded or restored by the Emperor Adrian, but remained feeble and stationary under its Latin masters, and offers to the historian little that is worthy of remark, until it received a new impulse and fresh vigor from the energies of a new race. Conquered in 760 of the Mahometan era (1359) by Morad, the first Sultan of that name, its condition became more prosperous, and its growth was rapid until the overthrow of Bajazet, when the interreign and civil dissensions which followed upon that event, placed a temporary check upon its advancement. Under Morad 2d its prosperity was renewed again, and beneath his wise and powerful dominion it promised soon to rival the vast capital of the Grecian Empire. By him it was enlarged and beautified. He adorned it with Khans and public baths, erected a palace and Serai, and founded the famous Mesjid, or mosque Moradije, which still bears his name. The Imareths, the schools, the libraries, the hospitals, the royal college, the sepulchral chapels, which surround and make part of this great work, remain to this day as monuments of the wisdom and piety of its founder. The first sultans of the race of Othman, however, evinced a preference for their Asiatic possessions, and until the conquest of Constantinople, in time of peace, usually fixed their court at Brousa, which was considered the first city in the kingdom. And still was Adrianople a residence every way worthy of a powerful monarch. It was well situated in a fruitful plain upon the left border of the ancient Hebrus, a small stream known by the name Maritz. A mild climate favored the health of its inhabitants, and prospered the labor of their hands; the olive, the myrtle and the lemon flourished luxuriantly in its gardens, and the adjacent country, well watered and fertile, supplied the city abundantly with all the more essential comforts of life.

At the time of which we write in the autumn of the year 1444, the tumult of warlike preparation and display had left Ederneh and passed away into

Asia. There still remained, however, a sufficient number of soldiers to impart an air of gaiety to the city. A single division of Janissaries was encamped upon the plain, the Adjemi Oglan, or novices, into the different odas or chambers of which the recruits were enrolled which should replenish and perpetuate that formidable infantry. These, if less able than veteran troops to defend the city, were at least better calculated to enliven it. In their daily practice with the jerrid and cimeter, their exercises in wrestling and with the ball, together with the martial music which at stated times attended them, they offered an attractive spectacle to the idle and curious; neither did many a grave wise man, a Cadi or Mollah, hold it beneath his dignity to pause as he passed by, nay, it might be, even to seat himself with the rest and gaze upon them. Beside these, many a mounted Spahi, a remnant of whom had been left at Ederneh, might be seen at all hours of the day coursing far and near over the plain. The greatest splendor, however, was within the city, in the Serai of the Sultan, and in the dwellings of the different lords of the Court.

The news which had reached Buda of the abdication of Amurath was not without foundation. That moderate and philosophic monarch had withdrawn himself from the cares of state, and resigned the sceptre to his son, Mahomet 2nd. Although yet a youth, the future conqueror of Constantinople had already given signs of his subsequent greatness. The energy and fierceness of character which he had inherited from his father, were not tempered, however, by his father's moderation. Devout, he was unrelenting and unsparing, and, quick to act, he seemed destitute of remorse. Although not prone to injustice, yet many of his actions were marked by a hastiness, not of judgment but of temper, which rendered him deaf to every appeal to his mercy, unless enforced by the promptings of religion. Of violent passions, he could deny himself of their gratification, but the effect which this had upon his temper, rendered his intercourse fearful, uncertain, and ensured the most careful obedience. So far as history leaves us grounds to judge, he seems to have resembled his ancestor Bajazet, more closely than any other monarch of that race. Yet his glance was clearer, his judgment more cool, and in the great crises of his life he had a power which Bajazet wanted, a power to control that haughty, indomitable temper, which, on occasions less pregnant with consequences, seemed to rule, and lead him astray. Although, when viewed at a distance of time and of country, and as pictured in the annals of Christian writers, he shows to us the features of a tyrant, yet those nearer his age and his throne extol his liberality and magnanimity. Certain it is; that when the Greek nation fell beneath his power, his success was marked by a degree of forbearance, which under similar circumstances of hostility, seldom characterizes the flush of conquest. But he was now young, and the passions of youth were strong upon him.

To check these, and to guide his inexperience, he was surrounded by the most skilful counsellors of his father's court, while the choicest generals were at his side, to teach him all that a sultan, and the son of a sultan should learn. Among the latter, and among the former also, for he combined in an exai-



nent degree the qualities of both, stood first the grand vizer, Khalil Pacha, the last of the family of Djenderi, who held this exalted station, which for nearly a century, had been occupied by that illustrious race. Next to him, ranked the Mouphti, the spiritual vicar of the sultan, a man distinguished for his virtue and wisdom ; among the rest, were the Beys of Anatolia and Roumelia, both able soldiers and of tried fidelity. The latter had scarcely reached the years of middle life, and still he was inferior to none other in the art of war. His skill and valor had gained him the dignity of Pacha of the highest rank, but at the battle of Istatu, his good fortune deserted him, his army was routed, he himself taken prisoner, and, notwithstanding the treaty of peace, he had not yet returned to Ederneh. His absence was no source of sorrow to the young Mahomet, and the rumors which were spread abroad concerning that lord, found a ready entrance at his ear. This was soon observed at the court, and many who knew the impatient spirit of the sultan, saw in this, as they thought, a disposition to free himself from his counsellors, and shake off the restraint which their presence imposed upon him. But there was yet another motive that influenced Mahomet, which will be made evident in the course of this narration.

Among the sages who had served his father, and who still showed their white beards in his council, there was no one who enjoyed a greater share of favor, than the venerable Abdallah ben Saadi. He held the post of Muredjim Baschi, or first Astrologer to the sultan ; and his art was in that age in high repute. He was deeply versed also in the secrets of Alchemy, knew well the nature of plants and minerals, and his learning was the result of a life of unwearied industry, and well applied experience. Many, in deed, were the mysteries of nature into which his sharp eye had penetrated,—mysteries which she carefully withholds from all except her most devoted worshippers. It belonged to his office to cast the horoscope of the young princes of the blood, to name the fortunate day for an intended expedition, or the founding of a Mosque, and to prepare the Takwim, or annual tablets, for believers, that, in their travels into distant countries, they might learn the direction of the holy city ; and thus their prayers remain valid and of effect. Among these more weighty duties, there were others which might seem trifling, but were a source of no little honor and profit to the learned man. These were to prepare the Gul Khane, or conserves of roses, for the princesses of the court, and the collyrium, called Surme, with which they paint their eyelids, and upon these he always bestowed the greatest care, sending often into Persia, Egypt, nay, even into India, to fetch thence rare foreign spices and confections ; for he knew the delicate taste of those for whom he labored, and would have his skill held in honor. Although well advanced in years, the good Abdallah was not deficient in personal grace and dignity. His features were massive, but regular and handsome ; his form was stately and large, and as he passed through the streets of the city, clothed with a caftan of blue silk, or on days of ceremony, with a robe of cloth of gold, furred with sable, with a high kulah upon his head, and his

handsome white beard reaching to his girdle, many would turn and gaze at him as he passed by ; and if it so chanced, that he met an officer of the court, an Aga or Oulema, a near friend, his features would then relax from their gravity, and become lighted up with smiles, as he gave the customary greeting of peace ; and the twinkling about his eyes seemed to speak of hours passed in cheerful intercourse, such as a true Moslem may of right indulge in. Nor did this feature belie him. His was one of those happy souls, which, though capable of abstraction, and fond of following out the secrets of science amid toil and vigil, do not lose their relish for the pleasures of life. Though he would spend long days and nights at the crucible, and over the pages of the Greeks, and for the mind's sake, as he would often say, defraud the body of its rights, yet it was a point of justice with him, and he well knew how to indemnify the latter for its privations. The nights of the Ramazam, he held peculiarly his own. Then, he beamed full orb'd with wit and merriment. A jest seemed laid in each fold of his grave features, ready to leap forth as they were expanded, and the glance of his eye was a signal of mirth to those around. These qualities, with his acknowledged probity and learning, gave him an enviable station at court.

Not many days after the occurrences related in the preceding chapter, Abdallah sat alone in his chamber. But he looked not as he was wont ; his eye was dim, and his stately form bent. A large scroll lay open before him, but his glance did not follow the beautifully written characters. Neither did he gaze upon the noble view which the winding river, and the gardens of the sultan presented to him ; for, as an Aga of the outer court, he was favored with a rich dwelling, near the buildings of the Sarai. No ; his mind seemed busied with itself ; no object around appeared to attract his attention. After a while he closed the scroll before him, arose from the cushion upon which he reclined, approached the lattice, gazed upon the flight of the clouds, then turned and resumed his former position, sighed, and at last spoke in a mournful tone.

"I could now weep," he said ; "weep—and know not whether most from sorrow or from anger. They are preparing his ruin—the slaves!—who, were he here, would not dare to look awry upon him. But Allah is good, blessed be his name ! Who would have dreamed he had so many enemies ! and where have they lurked until now ? Oh, that he could appear and confront them ! I would give my right hand to see him—to see him ride into the court in the bold fashion which so well becomes him—make his way without a glance upon the rest, to throw himself in full humility at the feet of the sultan ; that were a sight for the eyes of an old man ! But he must come quickly. Mahomet lends a willing ear to the calumnies of his foes, and I well know wherefore. He must come quickly, or it will be too late. My own voice has been raised in his behalf, and not in vain, I think. But long—I see it well—long it cannot remain thus. As I pass by I hear them—how scornfully they speak of my words, when I plead for Ali Pacha, and maintain his honor and fidelity. 'He would give his daughter to the Bey,' they whisper.

and the sultan's cheek grows red and pale, and I stand there as though I heard nothing of it, and cease not to speak in his defence. 'It is for this,' they cry, 'that he pleads thus warmly for him!' But it is false, by God's holy prophet, it is false! It is that I know his worth, his virtue, his immovable fidelity to a master whom he loves and venerates, who has raised him from the dust, and made him what he is. And if I would give her to him? are they not worthy of each other? Mahomet shall not have her." Here the old man lowered his voice, and looked carefully around the apartment. "No! though he should bribe me with a Pachalick. Better dead, than owe honor and happiness to the frail, fickle passion of a boy. Of what worth were the post of Sultana, when held by such a thread? But with *him*, her life would pass as upon the wings of the bird of paradise. The place to which he might advance her, would be secured to her by love, by the steadfast virtue of an honorable soul, and her happiness would be secure. Allah, dispel the cloud that rests upon her brow! But these rumors, that each day brings, now that he is a slave to the beauty of an Infidel maiden, now an apostate from the faith of his country, I know not how to think concerning them. It was not so exceeding strange that after the truce he should still linger among the Christians. It was like him, in accordance with his character; he was so formed by God as to wish to know, and to learn the customs and history of other nations. I should not wonder if by this time, he had made his own their language, their mode of warfare; yes, and has perhaps already encountered their warriors in their warlike sports. But this should have an end, and two moons have already passed since he was free to return. That he should feel the power of beauty, whether of Moslem or Giaour—this was also to be looked for from his warm blood. And this, alas! agrees with the horoscope I framed of his fortunes. Said not the stars, 'He shall find kindred in Christian lands?' Alas, alas! and yet did not those same stars foretell that his fortune should burn brightly in the east? And how could this be, if he should wed in Hungary, and revolt from our holy faith? But the latter is impossible—I fear it not. True it is, he might bring home with him a Christian wife, and that without prejudice to his faith, and thus might the stars prove true—and thus, poor Leilah, would thy happiness be perilled, as I fear! Aye, but a good Moslem, a brave servant saved to the sultan, alas, alas! a higher power must undo the web." The old man was now silent for a time. He opened the scroll that lay before him, and endeavored to read, but it seemed as if his efforts were unsuccessful. He closed it again, remained for a while with his forehead resting in his hand, then raised his head, and struck his hands thrice together. Upon this, a female slave entered the apartment.

"Is thy mistress awake or sleeping?" said Abdallah.

"She wakes, my lord," answered the slave, crossing her arms upon her breast, and bowing low.

"Say to her, I will visit her. But stay, how does she pass the time in her solitude?"

"One day differs not from another, oh, my lord. She sits hour after hour by the side of the fountain, gazing through the lattice, which opens upon the great square."

"Does she not read, or work at her embroidery?"

"Neither, my lord, she takes no delight therein, nor in any thing, if the truth be spoken, but in watching the play of the fountain, and in bathing her hands to and fro in its waters."

"Will she not play upon her lute, and sing to it at times?" asked the old man.

"At times she will sing and play," answered the slave; "but this is no help to her melody; nay, rather has it an evil influence upon her; for she weeps when she sings; and if the song be of love, as indeed all are, for the most part, and a favorite one, an old song, it is often hours before she can regain her composure."

"Tell her I will see her," said the old man, shaking his head sadly. "Yes, I will see if the shadow be not lighter upon her brow," he continued, after the slave had retired. "I will learn her most secret emotions. When he was taken captive, then she began to droop; but within these three days her cheeks has lost all remnant of its hue, and the light has gone from her eye, like the flame from a lamp that is without oil, to nourish it. She has lent an ear, doubtless, to the note which these rumors sound. Some prying merchant, or narrator of tales, has brought the tidings to her; be he accursed! Or, has she not visited the baths? Aye, therein lies the secret! There they assemble together, both wives and daughters, with the news of a week upon their tongues. Then flow the words like water, and of what weight and import, he may easily understand, who has once seen two of the sex together. I remember three days are not gone by since she was at the bath; and just so long is it that she has been thus sorrowful. She shall go no more thither—not once again, by the beard of my father!" Thus saying, the old man arose, and shaking his head, and muttering indistinctly, left his chamber to seek the apartment of his daughter.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### LEILAH.

HE found her reclining upon low cushions that were strewn about the chamber. She had chosen her place by a small fountain, which played near a window of the apartment. One arm was thrown negligently over the marble reservoir, into which its waters fell, and she seemed watching the drops that poured like fine rain over her transparent fingers. Now and then

she would place her moistened hand upon her forehead, and each time with a low soft sigh, as if it brought relief to a burning and throbbing brow. At times, her eye would turn to the prospect afforded her through the low window. The wide plain to the north and west of the city was there spread out to her view, variegated with gardens and with vineyards, and stretching far away to the hills, which form the first approaches to Mount Hemus. One portion of this plain was covered with the Turkish encampment, and enlivened by groups of Janissaries, seated gravely on their small carpets, or slowly pacing their way from tent to tent, and by mounted Spahis, careering far and near. By her side stood a small low table, upon which were placed refreshing drinks, sherbets, and the soothing medicaments which the care of her father had provided for her. At a little distance, was a frame for her embroidery, with the ground work set up, and prepared for the needle; but farther than this, the delicate work had not progressed. Upon her lap lay a scroll, and at her feet, a lute. She had taken the latter in her hand as her father entered, and in a plaintive, sweet voice, began a soft song, for she had not heard him. It ran—

“Allah who framed the stream,” &c.

She did not finish it, but interrupting herself with a deep sigh, laid aside the lute, and resumed her occupation of watching the playing of the fountain upon her fingers. Her long black hair was unloosed, and streamed over her shoulders, shading the polished whiteness of her neck, and at times fell clustering around her forehead and eyes. As she raised her head and shook the curls back from her face, her glance met that of her father. A glow of pleasure flashed from her dark eyes; she turned, but did not rise. Abdallah was quickly at her side, and as he bent over to raise her, his flowing white beard rested against her cheek and bosom, mingling in striking contrast with her own dark locks.

“Alas! my father, my father!” she exclaimed, pouring a flood of tears upon his bosom.

“My Leilah!” said the old man, pressing his lips to her forehead, and then lifted her from his breast to gaze upon her features. “My Leilah, how dost thou? how farest thou to-day?”

“Even as yesterday, my father; neither well nor happy.”

“And thus wilt to-morrow find thee, if thou wilt give no heed to my words. Why is it that thou art always here, seated like a statue ever in the self same place? How often must I repeat, that these northern breezes are too chilling? The sun is now in the Scorpion, and his level rays temper not sufficiently the winds from Mount Hemus. If thou wilt breathe the fresh air, let it be from the south, that which blows from the mountains has a quality too keen for thy weak frame. Let Fatima throw open yonder lattice. The landscape is as beautiful as this, which thine eye now rests upon.”

“It is not so gay,” replied the maiden, after some hesitation. “See yon-

der! the tents, the array of the novices, and the square where the Spahis daily exercise their steeds."

"Nay, nay, this stir and bustle are no help to thy malady. Thou dost need quiet and repose. Forget not, henceforth, to give better heed to my counsel."

"Alas, my father, be not angry with me. It is my custom of old, to seek this spot. And if, remembering thy commands, I remove from it, and betake me to some other lattice, some other chamber, yet I wander back unwittingly, and find myself, scarce knowing how, at this window, and unconscious that I have been sitting here for hours."

"And why is this?" exclaimed the old man. "Why dost thou choose this beyond the rest, for thy favorite spot, and sit here hour after hour, and neglect all others? The view of Azim's court, the prospect which thine own garden affords, and the gardens of the Serai—while the cool breeze blows here upon thee, and this against my wishes, my commands? There must be another reason."

"Another reason!" she replied, while her cheek glowed visibly.

"Aye, another reason!" he continued, more significantly, as he remarked her emotion; "something more than those gay tents, and the array of the novices. I have come to learn all from thee, Leilah; and I believe thou wilt not refuse thy father that confidence which he looks for, and deserves at thy hands."

"Ah, yes," she replied, drawing her burning cheek closer to the old man's bosom, to conceal her blushes; "ah, yes, there is another reason. I look yonder, to see the star of my hopes arise." As she said this, she pointed far off westwardly over the plain. The road to the mountains passed across its surface, and after being hid from the eye by interposing trees and undulating portions of ground, rose over the steep ascent of a hill; and although at a good distance, was still distinctly visible. "See!" she exclaimed, "when a certain turban rises over the crest of yon hill, and a form that I well know, spurs into view, then will my happiness bloom again."

At this moment a white speck was seen in the direction in which she pointed, and presently a steed and rider appeared upon the height.

"As I live, there is a turban on the hill!" exclaimed Abdallah. "Can it be he? look, Leilah!"

Lellah turned her eye upon the distant horseman, but her face did not brighten. Many disappointments had taught her to control her hopes. "They are hunters upon the heath," she said. "I have watched them since the morning. My eyes, father, are sharper than thine. When he appears, I shall know him, whether he come like a true Musselman, with turban and caftan, or in the steel coat of the Giaour."

"What dost thou mean by that?" exclaimed the old man. "Meanest thou that Ali Pacha—what could bring thee to this thought?"

"Have not I also heard? these dreadful rumors that aim at the honor and life of the best soldier of Islam!"

"And where hast thou heard these rumors, let me ask?" said Abdallah.

"At the baths," replied the maiden, "whither I went; now it is three days since, with Ayesha, the daughter of the Cadi."

"I might have guessed it," exclaimed the old man, angrily. "This, then, is thine errand at the baths! And who is it that brings thee such tidings?"

"Oh, scarcely is there anything spoken of there, except the treason and apostacy of Michal Ali; and they assert that, if he leaves his country and his religion, it will be for the love of a Christian maiden."

"By the beard of my father, but this would try the patience of an Omar. There you collect together, to hear and to tell what has happened within the week, aye, or within the month or year; nothing is so old but it will pass, all you hear, too, whether from slaves or husbands, until there is no longer a secret thing done in all Ederneh, unless some wise man keeps his own counsel, and whispers it not, even to his wife. And if the thing is not done, it is the same—you say it and make it—and here have we a fine chronicle of the times! Thou shalt go no more thither."

"Still, not the less shall I hear of all rumors that are abroad," replied the maiden, caressingly, "while merchants and dancing girls find their way into every Serai; and, above all, while I have a dear, dear father, who, each day, will tell me all I wish to know."

"Thou wilt hear enough, I doubt not," said Abdallah; "and from me all that it were well for thee to know. But I think, Leilah, that I have found now the cause of this sadness which rests upon thee. I have a key to the mystery in these tales which busy tongues have been pouring in thine ear."

"And is it strange, my father?" replied the young maiden, timidly. "Were we not reared under one roof, and more together, as thou hast often said, than suited with the custom of the city? When chosen from the rest of the Christian captives to be brought up to war, he was yet a child, and under thy care, and for a long time here in thy dwelling, he advanced in the paths of wisdom and of virtue. In thine own presence we read together the poets of former times, and the wise sentences of our sages. Was it strange, then, that from my childhood up I should love him as a companion, and, as he grew apace in stature and knowledge, that I should admire and honor him; for, was he not the noblest of the young candidates? After he had passed under the care of the white Eunuchs, I saw him no longer, except from this spot, as he exercised upon the square; and if the spear of his antagonist ever reached him, it was when his eyes were turned toward this lattice. When he went to the wars, I could not help but grieve; but my bosom beat with joy when I heard him mentioned as the bravest—his name proclaimed by the crowd; for I seemed to share in his fame."

"Aye, all this was not strange," interrupted Abdallah. "Yet it is long ago. The current of time should by this have swept away this childish emotion. But thou dost foolishly nourish it from thy fancy, and with reading those poets, who have touched with the warmest hand, the strings to which the heart so readily responds. Here now hast thou Nisami—away with him! His verse is like oil upon a flame."

"Nay, leave it to me, my father," exclaimed the young girl, grasping the scroll. "It is long since I have unfolded it. See here," she continued, opening the book, and pointing to a dried and withered leaf. When we last read this poem he gave me that jasmine which he had plucked upon the banks of the Euxine. He bade me place it here to mark a sentence which we both prized. "It keeps its fragrance long," he said; "ere it should be all lost, he would return. Praised be Allah! it still retains some perfume," she added, as she leant her head over the thin and withered flower.

"Is thy brain turned, Leilah, or hast thou forgotten all I have tried to teach thee of the nature of herbs and flowers? True it is, the jasmine is most tenacious of its odor; but seven years! that were a jest indeed, for so long is it since he first departed into Caramania, and hardly since then has such folly occurred."

Leilah averted her face from her father, but the blush which colored her cheek was visible to him, for it spread itself upon her neck, even tinging the white polish of her shoulder with a shade of crimson. Turning again quickly to him, she said—"We have seen each other since—but do not frown—it was but once, and not our wills, but chance ordered it so. It was when he last returned from Asia, where he had been sent to subdue the Pacha of Caramania, who had rebelled against the sultan. You may remember that we met then, though rarely, and always in thy presence. One night, you had gone out of the city, and I was sitting alone in my chamber, when a slave entered, and said that Michal Ali was without, and desired to see me. He had come, he said, to take leave of us for a long while. A sudden command from the Sultan sent him into Servia, and the following morning had been appointed for his departure. I hesitated, I knew not what to reply, but Fatima was with me, and it seemed, too, like taking leave of a brother. Well, I told her to admit him. He entered, dressed in a pelisse of lynx's fur, a present from the sultan, and nothing could be more noble than his appearance. I welcomed him, and then pointed him to a seat yonder upon the divan, but he seemed not to notice it, and placed himself near me, just as if you were present. I reflected in my own mind whether this were right, but as Fatima was with me, and as he also seemed to have my thought, and said he had come as a brother—I permitted it. There was something so soothing in the name, and it is so pleasant to make a brother happy. He spoke then of many things, first of the present, that he was fast rising in the favor of the sultan, and if successful in the intended expedition into Servia, had good hopes of a Pachalic. He could not leave, however, without bidding us farewell. He then talked of former days, the days of our childhood, and taking this scroll, he read from it a favorite sentence. He then placed that jasmine in my hands, and said as I have told thee already. Thus it was that the flower came into my possession-

"And you parted as brother and sister part?" said the old man, somewhat



"I cannot tell of that—but no parting could be more kind and friendly than ours."

"I mean—beard of the Sultan! but the youth has none—I mean with an embrace, clasping each other about the neck, and leaving a kiss or two for remembrance during so long an absence."

"That father, thou sayst, to punish me, for I see by thy brow that thou art angry. We parted as we met, and he touched not with his hand, even the border of my robe."

"Nay, I am not angry with thee, my child, though I should like well to have shared myself in that parting with Ali Pacha. Then had there been a father to thy brother and sister. And is this the last and the only time that thou hast seen him, when I have not been present?"

"The only time, and the last," replied Leilah. "But I think of him daily, nay hourly. And canst thou wonder that when I hear these things of him, I am sad? His happiness has been one with mine; through life I have rejoiced in his successes, and shall I not also grieve for his misfortunes? But you put no faith in these rumors? You believe not that he is a rebel, an apostate, and will wed an Infidel maiden?"

"He, an apostate!" exclaimed Abdallah "he a rebel! I would not credit it, though a prophet should rise from the dead to declare it to me. He is true as the stars are to their path. No drop of blood flows in his veins that swells not with honor, that comes not from a heart that is the seat of honor and loyalty. No fibre in his frame is false or yielding, but all of iron, say rather of steel, pure and tempered to noble uses. Take honor from him, and his eye would not see nor his heart beat, nor his brain think; and so while life is in him, I know where there is yet truth and loyalty to be found."

How pleased did Leilah listen as her father spoke thus warmly in praise of Ali Pacha. When he had ended, she exclaimed—"Thanks, thanks for these words! Neither do I credit what I hear of him." But why, why does he not return?"

"I find it not strange" said Abdallah, "that he would linger among the Christians, to observe their customs and learn their arts, whether of peace or war. That beauty, wherever it appear, should prove its power upon him, this also cannot excite our wonder, and therefore the fame which runs of his love for a Hungarian maiden may not be unfounded. Nay, should she embrace our holy faith, he may bring her with him to Ederneh, and that, without blemish to his religion or loyalty. More than this, I would risk my life we need not fear. And this—so that a good soldier is preserved to the sultan, and to thyself a friend and brother—this will not grieve thee?"

Although aware that her father's eye was fixed upon her as he put this question, yet the weak maiden could not conceal her emotion. Her face varied in its hue from red to pale alternately, and when she would have spoken, her voice failed her. She turned from him, pressed both hands against her bosom, as if in pain, or as if she would keep down the violence of her emotions. "I am content," she said at last. "Let Ali Pacha be happy, be

honored and happy, and Allah has granted my chief prayer. I will pray only that he may so far forget me as to hear of my unhappiness, my death, without sorrow. I will rejoice at least that his fame is unspotted, his honor, his religion, unstained. My heart will still beat when I hear him named, and the good Moslem, the brave cimeter, his surname. May his steed bear him with a sure foot; may the edge of his sabre never turn, nor his heart's love be checked.

The eyes of the old Abdallah were filled with tears. "Sits the malady then so deeply, Leilah? And knowst thou what it is, this malady?" She turned her face inquiringly towards him, but her emotion did not suffer her to speak. "Thou dost love Ali Pacha, my daughter," said Abdallah, folding her in his arms.

"That is it, father, which fills my bosom with shame. I try often to believe that it is but as a friend of former years, as the companion of my childhood, that I value him. If I could but convince myself of this, if I could with a true heart welcome him with his Christian wife, I might lift up my face again, and no longer feel humbled to the dust."

"Time will bring help to thee, my child," replied the old man, and then added after a short pause, "but if the worst should prove true, should the Bey of Roumelia have become false to his God and to his Sultan, I look to thee, Leilah, for a pride which will raise thee above him, and above all remembrance of him. If he have sunk indeed to this depth, stoop not even with thy sympathy so low as to pity him. Others there are who will be ready suitors for thy hand—some of the noblest and highest."

"Is it to console my heart that thou sayst this, my father? My first trial of this passion, if it be love, which I feel, has been too unhappy. Let me then renounce it. Ah, yes, with thee let me pass my days in peace."

"But thy pride, Leilah! How is it with thy pride? This may be gratified. Thou mayst join thy fate with that of some high and noble Moslem, and even shouldst thou not love him with all the warmth of thy heart, still thou canst be happy. Thou wilt identify his fortunes with thine own, share his triumphs and the glory of his deeds, take thy part of the honors which are showered upon his head, live in and for his renown, until ambition shall become love, and its gratification near akin to the pleasures of that passion.

"Ah! with love to envelop all, like the woof which holds together the various colors and figures that shine upon its surface! I have so wedded my thoughts to such a picture, that I cannot separate one part thereof, but the whole vanishes into air."

"Thou mayst think thus while viewing the picture, but when the reality is offered thee—when some successful warrior shall ask to join his fortunes with thine—the noblest of our nation—the sultan himself, perhaps."

"Mahomet!" exclaimed the maiden, shrinking more closely to her father's bosom, and turning her face upward to his with a look of fear. "But no, thou couldst not make me a toy for the wild passions of a boy. Such a fate could not hold me long. I can believe that in the serai of a calm and even-tem-

pered man, from whom I could be sure of kindness and esteem ; who would expect from me only such love as my impoverished heart could bestow, I might be content—such a one I could honor, and I could devote my life to his happiness without murmuring. But with *him* each moment would be a fear, every thought a torment.”

“ Yet think of his exalted fortune. He is chosen to fill a wide page in the history of the world, and of his glory some part must reflect on thee. In naught does he come short of the August Morad, save in justice and moderation, and these time will give him. Find you not here a motive ?”

“ Grant that ambition had weight with me, and that I aspired to glory—could I expect this with him ? Should I not rather hold even life and honor at the pleasure of an ungoverned soul ? This at least is sure—I should see many a rival placed in turn above me.”

“ True ; but this lot is common. Few are there who do not take into their serai others to share their hearts.”

“ Yet to the mistress they are inferior ; they but swell the number of her slaves. Thus at least say all with whom I have spoken.”

“ This also thou dost hear at the baths !” exclaimed Abdallah : “ well, it is their happiness to think thus.”

“ But no law binds the Sultan save his will,” continued the maiden. “ Whom he pleases he lifts from the dust, and then let him but withdraw his arm from beneath them, and they sink into nothing. May I never live to see that day when I shall be sought in marriage by a Sultan, least of all by the fiery Mahomet !”

“ Thou hast already lived so long,” said Abdallah. “ Mahomet burns for thee with the wildest passion.”

“ And has asked for my hand ?” exclaimed Leilah, trembling.

“ Aye, and is impatient until thou art his wife. Nay, tremble not thus—it shall not be. I myself would as gladly follow thee to the tomb, as place thy happiness in his hands. Thou wouldst be better cared for yonder in paradise than in his Serai. Thy malady has furnished me a rare excuse for delay, and therefore I have the less grieved for it. I ride to-morrow with him to hunt the stag and wild boar, and he will not fail after his custom to question me of thee. But thou needst not fear ; thou shalt not leave this dwelling until thou canst find one where thou wilt be happier, or at least fancy that thou wilt be so.”

“ There is none, there can be none where I shall be happier,” murmured the maiden scarce audibly.”

“ That truly, I would not say so confidently,” said the old man encouragingly. “ But now take thy lute, and sing thy gayest songs. Banish every thought of the past and of the future, and live lightly on in the present moments. The crisis of a life lies often in a single hour, and who can tell how near that of thine own may be ?”

Leilah smiled faintly in reply, but did not answer, and having embraced her

readily, and adding many other words of encouragement, the good Abdallah took his leave.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE SULTAN.

It was scarce twilight on the following morning, when Abdallah ben Saadi arose from his couch to keep the early time of the hunt. Having performed his ablutions and repeated the prayers of day break, he placed his turban upon his head, thrust his feet into his sandals, adjusted his robes, and descended into the court. He here summoned a slave, gave him various directions, which referred, for the most part, to preparations for the expected chase, and, charging him to hold horse and hound in readiness, passed onward to the second gate (orta capou). All was still and motionless except the Capoudji Baschi, who paced gravely before the entrance, and some score of Baltadjis, with their high caps of yellow felt and their long pikes armed at the extremity with an axe (Balta,) which now and then gleamed in the faint light of the dawn, as they moved silently along the foot of the high wall of the interior court of the Serai. On passing the inner gate, more stir and bustle met the eye of the old man. Slaves richly dressed were hurrying to and fro, some leading steeds gaily caparisoned, some bringing forth the hounds, and others again looking to the furbishing of the long javelins and hunting spears. He observed also, here and there, Turkish lords, looking with their own eyes after the dogs, and from this he knew that they were about to hunt with Mahomet on this day. As he passed along, his glance fell upon the dogs of the sultan. He stopped for a moment to admire them, when his attention was attracted further onward by two black hounds of uncommon size and strength. Such as these he had never before looked upon; no dogs could be more beautiful, but what chiefly called forth the wonder of Abdallah was, that there were but two in number. "By the Prophet," he exclaimed, "what foolishness is this? such beautiful dogs and the leash not complete! What a sight is this for a good huntsman to look upon. Were they mine, now, instead of the sultan's, I would have them forthwith to the kennel—it is an offence to the eye, a scandal." Thus spoke the old man and turned to go farther.

"Accursed be the hounds!" exclaimed a voice near him. "They will cost a man's life, and this is more than they are worth, were they the best that ever followed the game."

Abdallah cast a glance upon him who uttered these words. He was a man well advanced in years, and dressed in the garb of a Bostandji; he was seated upon the ground with his head bare, his face resting in his lap, while

his cap of red cloth lay at some distance, as if he had cast it from him in a paroxysm of grief or anger. "Why curse you the hounds thus, old man?" said Abdallah, drawing nearer to him. "Are they so fierce that you fear them; or why is it?"

"Those dogs I should like to meet with, that I cannot tame," said the other, looking up. "Alas, no, it is a different case. But the deed is done, and my neck must suffer for it. But you, oh my lord, are a merciful man," he continued, and falling upon the earth he kissed the feet of the sage. "Your goodness is known throughout the city—you will speak in my behalf with the sultan, that I die not, nor the poor slave who is the cause of this hurt."

"What is thy name?" said Abdallah, glancing sharply at him.

"I am called Selim, my lord," replied the Bostandji.

"I remember thee well. Thou hast a son in the service of the Bey of Roumelia, and now a prisoner with him among the Infidels."

The old man seemed moved by the recollection. "Aye, my lord," he replied, "and he has served him with all fidelity, and this deserves a good word for the father—is not this your meaning?"

"Let me hear first the fault thou hast committed, or this slave, since it was he, thou sayst," said Abdallah.

"It is three nights ago," commenced the Bostandji, "as I was walking without the city, that I met a man who asked alms of me in the name of the Prophet and the sheik Omar, whose grave lies not far off from the spot. He said and swore to me, my lord, that he had no means of sustaining life, and so, as Allah knows, I was in want of a slave, I took him home with me to assist me in my labor. Then, here sends the prince or Paeha of Caramania, three hounds like those yonder, as a present to the sultan, may his steps be blessed. Well, three days ago—yes, it is just so long, from the first moment came ill fortune with him—three days ago he neglects to fasten the hounds in the kennel, for I had given him this to do as an easy task, since he was weak and faint, and able to endure little. As I say, he forgets to fasten them, or does it so negligently, that they break loose in the night, and after roaming about in the court, and frightening every one, are found again truly, but one of them sadly hurt, and we must thank Allah it is no worse. But it is enough, it is enough," he continued, tearing his beard; "the leash is spoiled—some one's neck must suffer for it."

"By the beard of my father, you say truly, old Selim," said Abdallah. "This is not an offence that the sultan will look lightly upon—forty stripes at least, be he in never so mild a mood."

"Accursed be the dogs, and he who sent them!" exclaimed the Bostandji, and again tore his beard, and beat his breast with his hands.

"Art thou not ashamed, old man, to make this outcry. There is no help. Give up the careless slave who caused the mischief, and it may be thou wilt thyself escape."

The countenance of the Bostandji fell, he seemed perplexed, he moved to and fro uneasily, and at last said: "By the life of the sultan, I cannot do it

"I am a good Musselman and compassionate, and have pity for the unhappy wretch."

"This is a new strain for thee, old Selim," said Abdallah. "Who was it that suffered Cassim, the gardener, to undergo the bastinado, because the gate in the rear of the garden was found open, when it happened only from thy carelessness? Ha! thou grey-bearded sinner! And was it not the prayers of thy son with his master the Bey, that saved thee from the bastinado?"

"I remember it, and therefore there is more reason why I should act compassionately toward this unfortunate slave,"

"Thou act compassionately!" exclaimed Abdallah. "Wilt thou, dog as thou art, pretend to so much sympathy as would bring thee to bear a single stripe for another, though it should save his head! There is some mystery here. Is this the culprit?" he continued, turning to a slave who drew near to him. In his pallid, careworn face, the sage thought he discerned features that were known to him. Still, however, he could not rightly satisfy himself who it was, and inquired his name.

He whom he thus addressed hesitated for a moment, and then answered, "I am called Hassan, oh my lord."

"Youssouf! slave!" exclaimed Abdallah, with the greatest emotion, "where is thy master?" Youssouf, for it was he, fell at the old man's feet, without the power of replying. "Nay, rise!" said the sage, controlling himself, "kneel not to me thus in the open court. It will ruin all. Rise, and tell me where is thy master?"

Youssouf arose, and he replied with tears, "Alas, my lord, I cannot tell."

"Was he not at Buda, in the camp of the Christians? Speak in a few words."

"When I last saw him, my lord, he was in the Christian camp. But things have gone strangely there. On returning one day to the tent of my master, I heard that his life or liberty had been in danger from the Infidels, and he had departed homeward; and he who told me this was a good friend of Ali Pacha, although a Giaour. He urged me also to fly if I valued my safety, whereupon, as I had nothing to keep me there longer, I mounted horse, and rode willingly from the nest of the accursed brood. I have not seen him since that hour."

"Not seen him, nor heard tidings of him!" cried the sage; "and he had already left the Christian camp, sayst thou?"

"He left it before me by some hours, though this is of but small account in a course from Buda to Ederneh. But my journey was crossed by many obstacles. Cold and hunger overcame me, so that often I was forced to rest—scarce at any time, indeed, could I ride at the speed I desired. I thought to find him here before me. But some mischance has befallen him; he has fallen into the snares of those dogs, the Christians—I shall never look upon his face again." Thus spoke Youssouf, and wept bitterly.

"Allah is all powerful!" said the sage, much moved, and turned to proceed upon his way.

"And thou wilt intercede for me with the sultan?" said the old man, detaining Abdallah by the robe.

"Stay me not, slave. I will do what I may, but it is no slight thing to cross the sultan in his anger. Back! hold me no longer!"

"Nay, one word, my lord," exclaimed Youssouf: "should I no more look upon my master—should this mischief with the hound reach so far as to cost me my life, say to my most noble lord, to Michal Ali Pacha, that I was faithful to him, that I did not leave him among those Giaours, but thought he had been gone before me—tell him that I died faithful. Thou mayst say this, and have no falsehood written in thy book. And wilt thou not also care for Zeinab—he has borne me, unworthy one, through a thousand perils. I have left him with a good Musselman who lives near the bridge Ada Kuprussy. Ask for Agib, the pastry cook, who for a handful of aspres, or a sequin or two, will place him in thy hands."

Thus far listened the sage, and delayed no longer, but bent his way in haste toward the broad steps which ascended to the entrance of the serai. The porters at the gate readily admitted him, and having passed through a long range of corridors and galleries, he came at last to the chamber of the sultan. A eunuch of the palace, when he had inquired the will of his master, ushered him in. After he had put off his sandals, he entered, and found himself in the presence of Mahomet. The youthful sultan had just arisen from his couch. His brow was anxious and furrowed, his cheek pale, and his eye sunken and haggard. It might easily be seen that his sleep during the past night had been disturbed and unrefreshing. His garments had not been arranged, his robe hung loosely and carelessly about his person, and his turban sat awry upon his brow. For all this, however, there was something kingly in his mien. The first down of youth shaded his chin and cheek, and his motions were quick, and if it might be so said, imperious, like those of one unused to opposition. But the most striking feature in his face was the eye. In it there seemed laid a terror, that had only to wake to convulse all around him. It was small, and of a coal-like blackness, but seemed, when his bosom was shaken by passion, to burn as with a living fire. The old man bowed low before his master, but did not speak: he waited until the sultan should first address him.

"Thou art early here, Abdallah," said Mahomet, after a slight pause, "though not too early for my wishes. The first breath of the morning is inspiring to the ready hunter. Yet I care not for it, but that it may cool this fever in my veins."

"I had not heard of thy malady, most noble sultan," said Abdallah, rising from the earth. "I had not heard that the sun which shines upon our empire had been overshadowed."

"Nay, it is no evil which thy simples can reach, though thou art partly Hakim, and art said to have healed many sick," answered the sultan, impatiently. "Yet how know I that? By Allah, I know not that? How fares thy daughter?"

"Like a plant that hath had no rain—withered, withered!" replied Abdallah, shaking his head sorrowfully.

"Has this malady laid hold upon her beauty?" asked the sultan.

"Alas, alas! she merits not a glance, so has the color faded from her cheek."

"But her eyes, Muredjim, those bright eyes; that mouth, which could smile such things; that form which no houri could equal—these are untouched?"

"All gone, my lord," exclaimed Abdallah. "I scarcely know her when I look upon her. She has not so much beauty left as would serve for Fetnah, the deformed."

"She must, indeed, have changed then, since my happy eyes first saw her in thy garden. Little thought had I that such a treasure was near me, and least of all in thy keeping, good Abdallah—and still I had heard of her, heard the praises of her beauty, but who could have imagined she was such a Zuleika, such a houri. But you have spoken with her? you have told her of my love?"

"Why doth it please my lord, the sultan, to give this name to the fancy of an hour?"

"Fancy! dost thou call it, slave? this burning passion which oppresses my heart, heats my brain, and fills my soul with desire. Is it fancy that sends the blood like molten lead through my veins, that makes my nights sleepless and my days wearisome and wretched. Look yonder, Muredjim, at that disordered couch. Why have I tossed so restlessly upon it, and who was it, as I turned from side to side, who was it that stood before me? who but thy daughter, old man? Leilah, the day-star of beauty and happiness. And yon pillow that thou seest crushed out of all form and order; often as I woke did I clasp it to my hot brow and panting bosom, and as often did I swear that she should be mine."

"It is a malady of the blood, and with meagre diet and observance of—"

"Prate not," said the sultan, with a quick glance. "I follow the precepts of the prophet as given in the Koran. A malady thou dost esteem it—it may be so—but not to be removed by thy conjurations. 'Tis Leilah, 'tis herself alone can dispel it."

"And hast thou considered, oh, my lord, what will follow when this malady is thus dispelled?"

"Health—not this burning fever, nor the cold apathy of satiety, as I read in thy face, thou wouldst say. But hast thou spoken to her of my love?"

"Aye, may it please the sultan, yet in part only and in measured terms, for why should I wholly turn her brain which already was somewhat shattered by this illness—but when she is once in health—"

"Delay, ever delay," exclaimed Mahomet, angrily, "but let it not be long; use thy best art, and let our own Hakim see her daily. I am impatient till I call her mine, till I place her as Sultana at my side."

"But will thy august father approve th's purpose? will the divan counsel it,



and all good Musselmen who pray for the extension of their faith, and the glory of the house of Othman?"

Mahomet turned quickly upon the questioner, his eye flashed, and he asked scornfully, "Am not I sultan? or are there others above me, while I am but a puppet upon the throne, to be moved at their will, and as they order it? But let us forth into the fields; I feel the blood mount and tingle in my brain, this anger may one day work me mischief. The morning air will aid me. Was the grey Arab in the court?"

"I saw him my lord, chafing in the hands of two slaves, and hardly could they control him, so eager is he for the field."

"Didst thou not see also—" the sultan checked himself with a smile, and then continued, "I remember, good Abdallah, that when we last went upon the hunt, there was for the sport's sake a trial of speed with our dogs."

"I have not forgotten it, my lord."

"In that trial I think thy hounds had somewhat the advantage."

"Nay, that is far from certain, may it please the sultan," replied Abdallah. "It was thought there was scarce a difference between them."

"Yes, there were some that said so, and some who even thought the advantage lay with mine. But think you I always see with the eyes of others? It was clear, Muredjim, that thy hounds were fleetier than mine own and as sure upon the scent. I can learn even in small things to see the merit of another. What means that look?" exclaimed the sultan, quickly, as his eyes glanced upon the countenance of Abdallah. "Speak! answer! give me thy thought."

"My face has already betrayed it," replied Abdallah. "May it please the sultan, I will speak boldly. I reflected, oh, my lord, that if in small things thou canst judge thus justly of the merit of another, whether also in matters of more moment—I mean—will not my lord forgive the presumption of his slave?" continued the old man in great perplexity, throwing himself at the feet of the sultan—"I mean Michal Ali Pacha."

"I had guessed it from thine eye," replied Mahomet. "And do I not judge him justly? I know him to be brave and skilful, yet he has shown himself but a slothful servant, a cold-hearted Moslem, nay, if there be truth in rumour, a traitor and an apostate. I know too his presumption—and let him beware! Of his slothfulness or treason the divan shall judge. But let him take good heed that he cross me not in my path. Should I find him there, woe to his rank, his life. And herein do thou counsel him, Abdallah, should he return, for thou dost love him; bid him step cautiously and humbly. Bid him not lift his eyes to her whom I have chosen for myself. But let us forth. It is not good to speak of such things in the roofed chamber, where the full bosom finds no vent: Come, we will see," he added, changing his look and tone, "if to-day also the prize of the hunt will be thine, old man, with thy Albanian dogs."

When they had descended into the court where the sultan was received with due ceremony, Mahomet mounted his steed, and bidding Abdallah do

the same and keep close to his side, he rode on to where the fierce black hounds of India were held in leash. As his eye fell upon the two, his countenance darkened. He did not speak for a moment, but looked now at the old slave, now at Yousseuf, and again at the hounds. At last he said in a quick, yet quiet voice, "There are but two; where is the third?"

"Alas, my lord!" exclaimed the old slave, and threw himself in the dust.

"Why is not the leash complete?"

"Alas, most gracious master, have mercy! A sore hurt—"

"A hurt!" exclaimed the young Mahomet, in a shrill sharp voice. "At whose hands, and in whose keeping? Not in thine, old Selim?"

"Alas, it is even so, my lord!" replied the slave, "yet not in my hands; they broke loose from their chains in the night, roamed about the court, and when taken, one of them was found somewhat wounded in the foot. But in a few days—"

"Dog, and the son of a dog!" exclaimed Mahomet, spurring his horse nearer to the prostrate slave, "a single hair of yon hound was worth the lives of ten such as thou art."

"Let the guilty suffer, oh, my lord," exclaimed Yousseuf at this moment, and threw himself before the sultan. "It was I whose folly caused the hurt of the hound."

"Who! What is this? Speak, old man!" said the young prince, looking alternately from one to the other, and straining the handle of his cimeter tightly within his grasp. "Speak quickly, who is the guilty one?"

"I, myself, my lord!" said the bostandji, stealing a glance from the earth. "'Tis a poor slave, somewhat shattered in the brain. He knows not what he says."

"Nay, my lord," exclaimed Yousseuf, "be the punishment mine, for I alone am guilty. Canst thou deny it, old man, that the dogs were in my keeping, and through my foolishness came to injury?"

"'Tis strange!" said the sultan, turning to the sage who had drawn near to him, though at a loss what to do or say for the safety of the culprits. Seest thou Abdallah, that it is already held a favor to die by my hand? Stand up, both of you, from off the earth, yet repeat your last prayer," he exclaimed, unsheathing his cimeter. As he spake, the sun rose slowly over the edge of the horizon. The steel which he waved, flashed in the rays of the young morning; a slight breeze, as if the precursor of its coming, shook the foliage of the trees and the waving turbans; the birds gave their first notes, and the grass teemed with myriads of waking creatures. Like that statue of old earth seemed to pay homage to the rising day with the harmony of a tuned instrument of strings. The call of the Muezzin, with their sweet-voiced summons, was heard from each neighboring minaret. "To prayer, to prayer!" sounded from every lip. All fell prostrate upon the earth, sultan and slave, condemned and uncondemned, to pray to Allah, and do honor to his prophet. When Mahomet arose, his brow was calmer. He spoke not a word; he seemed to have forgotten what had passed. He swung himself in silence

upon his steed, and with Abdallah at his side, and followed by a train of attendants, rode slowly out of the gates, and down the streets of the city.

Thus early did Mahomet give tokens of that self-command for which, in after life, he was so distinguished. Possessing the most violent passions—passions which under common guidance would have convulsed all within their sphere, and at times yielding to them with headlong recklessness, yet he was endowed with the power of checking and restraining them when at their height. Later in life, this faculty gained strength, and history gives us many instances of his violent anger, and his power, by a sudden effort, instantaneously to control it.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE HUNT.

THE morning air was mild. The sun was unobscured by cloud or mist. Along the course of the river thin wreaths of vapor were visible, but they were rapidly disappearing before his strength. The dew lay in abundance upon the grass, and when brushed by the horses feet sent up a sweet odor, fresh with the perfume of bush and herb and flower. The dogs bounded along impatiently in the leash, their long silken ears half hiding the golden collars which bore their name and the name of their master. Richly caparisoned steeds, noble riders in flowing caftan and turban, with their long spears gleaming in the sun, made up a picture, which attracted every eye as it swept rapidly over the plain. Mahomet with Abdallah rode somewhat in advance of the rest, while the hounds of India were held by a slave who kept near them. As they proceeded farther and farther from the city, many a stag was unharbored, and occasionally a wild boar roused from its couch, and in pursuit of the various game, the chase by degrees became separated. Abdallah, however, and a young Turkish lord, with their attendants, kept near the sultan. The sport was cheering and good. The new hounds, the present of the Pacha of Caramania, showed themselves of approved breed and training, and equalled every expectation; but Mahomet continued silent and absorbed. He rode on with the rest, hurled his javelin at a stag or wild boar when it came across his path, but his soul seemed not in the sport. Abdallah did not fail to observe this, and remitting his zeal, rode by the side of his master, waiting for him to address him. But he rode for a long time in silence, for the sultan delayed to notice him. At last, however, he spoke. "What are thy thoughts, Muredjim, of yon scene with the slaves?" he said. "Was it not strange? Were they father and son, one could not more faithfully have offered his life for the other."

"Truly, it was a rare instance of devotion," replied the sage.

"Thou dost think it rare, good Abdallah?" continued Mamomet, musing. "We, the exalted of the earth, seemed formed of different clay. In the game of life, we aim at so much, the stake we venture for is so high, that love and devotion seem to lose their price in the comparison."

"Let not these thoughts oppress my lord, the sultan. His life and fortune are the life and fortune of an empire, and are not to be jeopardized for a touch of feeling or of honor."

"I have been thinking, Abdallah, if there lives one for whom I would show such devotion? even my father, to whom I owe all that I am? Yet I owe it to him but as he owed it to his father, and as my children will owe it to me. But, as thou sayest, away with such thoughts. How thinkest thou of the foreign hounds? Are they not of a rare breed?"

"They excel all I have seen in strength and fierceness," answered the sage, "and for the leopard or wild boar, would prove perilous antagonists."

"But for the stag, sayest thou?"

"They seemed not so true upon the scent, my lord, nor in speed do they go much before our dogs of Albania."

"Thine own, thou wouldst say, Muredjim?"

"I meant it not so, my lord; and yet I will not deny that I hold my hounds dear. They have not the strength of the lion, nor the leap of the pard, neither will they fly in the air like a Tartar falcon; still I have never found them to come short in any thing which could be looked for in hounds. They are fleet and strong, true upon the scent, and trained to know the slightest wish of the huntsman."

"Thou art well skilled in the chase, Abdallah, for one of thy calling," said the sultan, smiling.

"Indifferently well, may it please the sultan. I have ridden often side by side with thine august father over these plains. I have known no one more skillful in hunting than he, may his steps be blessed, and he has often praised those dogs. I confess, I set much store by them; they were trained by a colder and more dexterous huntsman than myself."

"To whom dost thou accord such praise?" inquired Mahomet.

Abdallah hesitated, and then replied, "To one whose name is unpleasant in the ears of my lord the sultan."

"Ha, slave! wilt thou touch that cord again?" exclaimed Mahomet, his brow darkening. "Yet by the beard of Othman, thy hounds show no such careful training. But look! the lair of a stag—and by the footing, one worth the pursuit. He has harbored doubtless in yonder thicket. Cast off the dogs—it comes in good time—cast off! And, hark ye, Muredjim," he added, as they turned their way towards the thicket, "I will receive it as an omen of my fortune with the fair Leila. Let not a lance be thrown, save by myself and Abdallah ben Saadi, and this not till the stag turns to bey."

It might easily be seen by one skilled in the chase, that the stag, upon the track of which they had fallen, was one of uncommon magnitude, one likely to afford a good course, and if brought to bay, to offer an obstinate re-

distance. Its treadings were long and wide, its entry ample, and many a tall tree had been frayed by its spreading antlers. The baying of the dogs was soon heard within the thicket, and a moment after a noble hart sprang from the cover, and at a considerable interval, the hounds in pursuit. "See now, to the fame of thy dogs!" cried the Sultan, ere they were yet at full speed. Abdallah did not reply, but bent himself to the chase. The course of the game lay, for nearly a league, down a gentle undulating descent, then across a wide plain, bounded afar off by a narrow strip of woodland. So long as the chase ran over the firmer soil of the hills, the stag outstripped its pursuers, but in the plain there intervened at times, patches of soft, marshy ground; here the speed of the deer was materially lessened, its long, slender limbs sinking deeply into the earth, and the hounds in their turn gained the advantage. This was the case also where the soil had been turned up by the plough, or was loose and sandy in its nature.

Favored by circumstances of this kind, the dogs of the Sultan and the Muredjim were now gaining rapidly upon the flying game, but it was difficult to say with which lay the advantage in the chase. Now they coursed onward in close company, and then again at various intervals from each other, but not sufficient to betoken in either any evident superiority in speed. At one time the fortune of Mahomet would prevail, and then again the hounds of the Muredjim would outstrip those of the Sultan. Thus undecided was the chase as the deer dashed into the wood, followed at a little distance by the dogs, those of Abdallah disappearing first in the shadow of the foliage. "Ha! in the prophet's name!" exclaimed the old man, and they spurred their horses into the wood. In a few moments they emerged from the thicket on the opposite side, and lo! there was the stag pressing onward feebly, there were the hounds of the Sultan in close pursuit, but those of Abdallah were no where to be seen.

"It is magic, it is witchcraft!" exclaimed the old man in dismay, and cursed his stars and beat his breast with his hand.

"Oh, it is doubtless magic!" shouted Mahomet, exultingly; "something has crossed their path in the woods, and the blunderers have mistaken the scent. Have I not always said it, that thy dogs were not so sure upon the track? But, by the life of my father, the game is mine, and the prize, the omen!" And truly, the young prince seemed to have reason for what he said, for the Indian dogs were already leaping around the flanks of the exhausted animal, but the chase was terminated in an unexpected manner. He had scarcely spoken, when a javelin came from the thicket, and flying with good aim, pierced the stag, which fell headlong to the earth.

"By Allah!" exclaimed the Sultan, "who of our train has been thus ill advised, thus foolish?" Saying this, he dismounted from his steed, and drew the weapon from the still breathing animal. Having examined it with care, he reached it with a look of wonder to the sage, saying, "Thou dost lay claim to some wisdom, Muredjim; canst thou unfold this mystery? It is the

lance of an Infidel, the shaft is of ash, and the head was forged on a Venetian stithy.

"It passes my skill," replied the old man; "but what wonder comes yonder?"

Mahomet looked in the direction in which the sage pointed, and beheld a mounted knight, encased in complete armor, riding forth from an angle in the wood, and advancing towards them. "Yonder, too, come thy dogs, Abdallah. Call them off. They will drag him from his steed, were he Janorous Lain himself. But let it serve as a lesson to his presumption." The fears of Mahomet were vain, however. The hounds bounded furiously towards the stranger, but no sooner had they reached him, than they crouched to the earth, and then leaped up to his stirrup, greeting him after their way with a warm welcome.

"Seest thou, old man?" said the sultan, turning to him; "this seems, indeed, like magic! or were thy dogs thus trained to fawn upon a Giaour?"

"I cannot fathom it, my lord," replied the sage, shaking his head in great perplexity, "may it please the sultan, I cannot fathom it. And yet, if I should guess," he added, with some marks of agitation.

"Well, speak. Whom dost thou guess him to be?"

"He wears a form, my lord, like the Bey of Roumelia."

"By Eblis! it cannot be—yet it is like his boldness. But we will see—ride up, ride up, Muredjim!"

The bearing of the stranger was proud and lofty as he advanced to meet them, yet when Mahomet addressed him, it wore an air of submission, and his reply was humble as might become a slave speaking with his master.

"Yon stroke was ill timed, Christian," said the sultan. "Had one of my own train thus hindered me in my sport, it had fared ill with him."

"I thought not, oh, my lord," answered the knight, "that a huntsman was upon the track. I neither saw you, nor heard the baying of the hounds. I remembered only that the chase was free upon the hills."

"True, the chase is free without the precincts of the imperial parks. But thou art a bold Giaour, that in that garb thou dost venture thus near the royal residence. Thou hast doubtless a firman from the sultan for thy protection!"

"I am no Giaour, oh, my lord, neither have I a firman to secure my safety," said the stranger, and raising the vizor of his helmet, he disclosed the lofty features of the Bey of Roumelia.

"It is thou!" exclaimed Mahomet, his brow darkening beneath his turban, and his eyes gleaming with fire. "Thou art returned late, though in a fitting garb. By Allah!" he continued, laughing scornfully, "I did not look for this! and yet, it is like thee; it matches well with thy nature that with the boldness of the devil thou shouldst appear before thy master, clothed with the livery of infidelity and treason."

"Thy servant, may it please thee, sultan, would feel the sharpness of thy raproof, had the time left him the selection of his garb or weapons. I had

little choice when I put on this armor, and it has stood me in good stead. Without it, I had scarce passed in safety the camp of the Giaours."

"Nay, the danger lay not there—but that thou shouldst have ventured hither ; that thou shouldst have passed the frontiers unknown, unobserved and in safety—this it is that excites my wonder."

Ali's lip trembled with agitation for a moment, as he looked upon the young sultan, his judge, and listened to his words. "I passed not unobserved and unknown. I have not yet learned that I am proclaimed a traitor, and until the sultan thus speaks, till he reclaims my standard, the gift of his hands, my name is still of weight. It is well known among the faithful, and has ever been a passport to me whithersoever I would go."

As Mahomet listened, he seemed to dispel his passion, and to put on the semblance of a ruler and judge over the faithful, and he replied, "Thou sayst truly, Michal Ali Pacha, for I will yet grace thee with that title won by thy former deeds. It was once so with thee. Save the stem of Othman thou didst stand, perhaps, the noblest, loftiest tree, beneath the shadow of which the lowly of our faith rested secure. And thou wilt perish, not by time, nor by the tempest. No open nor secret enemy has laid the axe to thy root. From its own rottenness and decay will that tree fall which once gave shelter unto others, and as low as if the tempest had uprooted it."

"May it please my gracious master," replied Ali, "I have stood neither so high nor so fair. My fortune has been planted by the sultan's hand, and cherished by his favor. When it pleaseth him, I shall become as dust. But I thank Allah that he has given to Islam such rulers that the innocent may rest secure, that the dictates of the Koran, the words of our holy prophet—"

"Slave, profane not in my presence that name which thou hast abjured," exclaimed the sultan quickly, his eye lighting up with fire, and glancing upon Ali Pacha, as though it would pierce the inmost depths of his soul. But the young Moslem endured his glance without wavering. Raising his hand to heaven, and turning his face toward the Holy City, he said, with a firm voice—

"In that name is my hope, my trust. When I turn my back upon the prophet, may the God of the prophet turn his face from me. May my cimeter lose its edge, my steed stumble in battle ; and may I become a prey to mine enemies."

"And thou hast not been unfaithful—a traitor ?" said the sultan.

"I will confess with shame, my lord, that I have been slothful in my duty, but not unfaithful, nor a traitor. I have served the house of Othman with the pure blood of a Moslem, and if there be better still within these veins it shall flow freely."

"The Divan shall judge thee," said the sultan ; "and see well to it that thou canst clear thyself of all shadow of treason. If thou be found innocent thou shalt live ; if guilty, the bowstring is ready for thy neck."

"I can wish no more than this from the goodness of a gracious master,"

replied Ali Pacha; "but I have tidings, my lord, tidings for thine ear, in comparison with which my fate will sink into insignificance."

"Not here. In the palace, in the Divan," replied the sultan; "there I will lend a hearing to thy words. But I must remain no longer, lest I see another traitor commit his treason before my face. I see well thine impatience, old Abdallah. Now art thou burning with desire to welcome this apostate as a friend, a true Moslem."

"I will not deny my wish to welcome him," replied Abdallah; "and here, if it will not displease my master, I will greet him as an old friend; one whose past fidelity I have long known, yet one whom, should aught treacherous be proved against him, I would spit upon as a dog and an outcast." Mahomet did not remain to answer. Casting an angry glance upon the two, he struck the spurs into his horse, and rode onward, followed by all present, except the old man, and his newly returned friend. The two latter stood for some time silent, watching the departure of the sultan. But the young man could not refrain; he cast his helmet upon the earth, and before Mahomet was concealed from them by the distance, he drew nearer to the sage, and threw himself upon his bosom. Abdallah pressed him to his heart, and for some moments neither was able to speak, for both wept. "Such tears as these lighten the soul," said the old man at last. "But what a sight is this? thou, the pride of my soul, my son Ali, clothed in the garb of the Infidel!"

"Nay, my father," replied the youth, "dost thou not remember what thou hast often taught me: he that looketh upon the outside of a man, looketh upon the shell of the fruit."

"Yet, who is there, my son, that doth not judge in this wise?" said Abdallah. "Scarcely have we oft-times an index of its sweetness, save from its outward smoothness and fair seeming."

"But with me, in truth, it is not so," replied Ali. "Thou mayst try me, prove me to the inmost core. This thou hast a right to do, my father. They called me traitor, then?"

"Aye, and gave I know not what proof of it—thy long tarrying in the Christian camp, thy handling of their weapons, wearing their armor, and partaking in their warlike sports—these were the chief."

"And didst thou, father, doubt me, or give credit to these slanderers?"

"Never for a moment, though sore pressed by the slaves. There were some words, too, of a Christian maiden, whose beauty, Ali, had enslaved thy heart; and for her sake, as it was said, hadst thou forgotten thy faith to the sultan."

Ali's cheek reddened, he sighed deeply, but did not reply.

"I thought it might be so," said the old man, shaking his head sadly.

"Alas, father, I have had a dream, a strange, sweet dream, but I am fast awaking. Do not, then, disturb me from it too rudely." The young Moslem turned once again towards the West, stretched his arms thitherward, while his bosom heaved with a sigh, and then, accompanied by Abdallah, spurred his steed rapidly toward Ederneh. As they drew nearer to the city,



and rode at a quick pace up a steep ascent which intervened, Ali checked his horse, and said to the old man, "How well do I remember this hill, and the view of Ederneh, which surprises the traveller as he gains its summit. Let me go alone, father, let me look again alone upon the spot which holds for me the future." Ere Abdallah could reply, he had urged his steed to the top of the ascent, and stood there gazing upon the scene. The past returned to him, tears filled his eyes, he stretched out his hands, and blessed and welcomed the city of his home. In a moment Abdallah was at his side, and as he glanced upon Ederneh and saw his own dwelling amid the roofs and terraces of the Serai, he remembered Leilah, for he knew that the spot upon which they now stood was the same which she daily watched, and where she looked to see the star of her hopes arise again. As quick as thought, he spurred onward, and hurrying Ali with him, the view of the city was soon lost in the valley below.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RETURN.

ON entering Ederneh Ali bent his way toward his own abode, which lay in a portion of the city somewhat remote from the Serai. And thither did the good Abdallah accompany him. He was not to be deterred by the fear of the sultan's anger, neither did he regard the frowns and wondering looks with which his fellow citizens gazed upon him as they passed. When Ali reminded him of this, and spoke of the danger which his thoughtlessness might bring upon himself, the old man shook his head and motioned him onward. "It may be so," he said, it may be! but who can always control his heart? Where is the man who has not once been led into error by it?"

It seemed to the young Moslem as though there lay a reproof in these words of the sage, and he turned to see if he could read this in his countenance; but no,—the face of Abdallah was unmoved and calm; his only thought seemed to be to hurry onward. "I have so much to learn," he added, and pressed his horse with the spur. As they alighted in the court, a slave received their steeds, and they entered Ali's dwelling, but not until the latter had removed his casque, and all recognized with joy their long-lost master.

When they were alone, the old man took Ali in his arms again, and gave thanks to Allah that he had permitted him once more to see the face of his friend. "And now," he said, wiping the tears from his eyes: "now let me hear from thy lips the history of all which has befallen thee."

"But, first," said Ali, hesitating as he spoke; "first, let me ask after one who is dear to us both. How fares thy Leilah, my old friend and companion?"

"Alas, alas!" said Abdallah, shaking his head, "a lingering illness has seized upon her frame; a strange heaviness of spirit, and a slow decay, has weighed upon her for these many days. Allah, be good unto the child!"

"And is it so?" responded the young Moslem, gloomily. "Are these the first tidings that welcome me at my return? But is her malady so threatening?"

"Nay, I think not but all will yet go well. The heart is a buoyant and elastic thing in one so young."

"And I shall see her again—see her as of old, when a friendly glance from her eye was balm to my soul. Yes, that was a bright time, a bright and happy time, that of my youth. Let the cares of life weigh ever so heavily upon me—let my bosom be ever so depressed, she had still the power to cheer and soothe me."

"Truly, it was so once," said the old man, in something like an upbraiding tone; "but thou best know'st how all this has changed."

"Changed!" exclaimed the young Moslem. "Aye, it is true, there has much changed with me. Ali Pacha, Bey of Roumelia, is not the same as Michal Ali, suspected and out of favor. But what is this to us, father? This concerns not us—herein can lie no reason why I should not greet my old companion once more before I leave her, perhaps forever."

"How say'st thou? leave us!" said Abdallah. "Thou dost speak in riddles and dark sayings. Leave us! and whither?"

"To the camp of the Christians."

"Merciful Allah!" exclaimed the old man, lifting up his hands. "But thou dost say this to try me—or art thou indeed what these rumors have proclaimed thee?"

"Thou shalt hear, father," replied Ali; "thou shalt hear and wilt confess that the errand which draws me thither may not be slighted. Whether to my good!" Ali Pacha now proceeded to relate the history of the last few months of his life. He commenced with the first day of his captivity, and recounted in order all that had befallen him—his friendship for the young knight, his captor,—his motives for delaying in the camp of the Christians after the return of his companions in misfortune—his friendly intercourse with the Infidels, and his progress in acquiring their language, a knowledge of their customs, and skill in the use of their arms. He dwelt with somewhat more particularity on the arrival of the legate, Cardinal Juliani, at the camp; of his efforts to set aside the truce, and the success with which these efforts had been crowned.

"What say'st thou?" exclaimed Abdallah, interrupting his narration.—

"They will break this truce which they have so solemnly sworn to observe."

"As I have said, such was the resolve of their council," replied Ali.

"I call God and his holy prophet to witness against their treachery," said the old man, stretching his hands toward heaven. "Accursed be they to the lowest depths of perdition! But I see here the gathering of a tempest which

must convulse these lands to their foundations. And will the arm of Mahomet suffice to guide us through the danger?"

"I also have had this thought," answered Ali Pacha. "Yet he has good counsellors at his side, Khalil the vizier, Ibrahim the wise, and Bayezid, aye and—"

"Thyself, Ali Pacha."

"I thought not of myself," said the young Moslem. "My term of service is drawing to a close, I fear. But there is a host of others all equal to guide a council, or lead an army into battle. It was of these I would have spoken."

"Aye, but when the storm rises to the highest, all eyes will look for the arm of their chief, and who is this but the invincible Morad? Who can control our fiery janissaries, except the master spirit which has led them victorious through so many wars? And, believe me, my son, the Vizier Khalil is wise, and has the welfare of this land and of Islam close at his heart. He is devoted also to his old master, in whose service his beard has grown white—whom he holds to be invincible—in whose hands justice is secure, and in whose breast is counsel for every danger. Trust me, he would hazard his old head to bring back Morad to the throne, should the time demand it,—nor would I myself shun peril to aid him."

"I will urge it when I declare my tidings in the divan. But let us speak now of other things that concern ourselves alone:" and Ali Pacha proceeded to relate. He recounted the manner of his escape from the Christian camp, the nobleness of the knight who had set him free, and the danger into which he had fallen by this deed. There was one subject, however, on which he at first spoke with some reserve, and with a hesitation which went like an arrow to the soul of Abdallah. He did not deny the interest he had felt in the fair Bertha: he acknowledged that he had not escaped the power of her beauty, and that these feelings had not been without their influence in detaining him among the Christians. "I have erred" he then exclaimed, "but who can always control his heart? I have here thine own words, my good Abdallah, to plead in my excuse. I will be silent of her beauty, for I know not but I have seen a Moslem maiden as fair—but there was I, thrown into a new world to which this of ours can offer no similitude; there do men live but in action; there is knightly honor the breath of their nostrils, and the voice of woman cheers them on to deeds of daring; the brightest eyes smile upon the bravest, and the fairest hands place garlands upon his brow. If in their warlike games I vied with their best knights—if I reined my steed as scarce a Giaour of them possesses the art to do, I also at times received the need of my deserts. And oh, father, you know not what it is, this magic with which they surround their maidens—you know not what it is to kneel at the feet of beauty, while eyes beam down upon you like those of a divinity, challenging all devotion, while yet a distance separates you, which years of humblest adoration alone can pass. They have an art, these Christians, which exalts their women to beings of a higher nature, and a discipline that schools their senses into servitude, that chastens and tempers the heart, till like the

clear cold diamond, it will lie unchanged in the furnace. This they call loyalty to beauty and knightly courtesy. But I had none of this ; you well know, father, ours is a different school ! When I was thus assailed, it rushed through my brain like the hot simoon—but blessed be Allah who giveth good gifts unto his children. He hath given me firmness and an upright heart, and he will give me patience until the stream of time shall quench the fires of the past. Judge me then gently, father ; I also am a man like other men.”

The young Moslem here paused to subdue his emotion, a deep sorrow was visible in his features, his lip trembled and his eye shone with tears. In a moment, he continued—“ Thus then began this—this love, if you will, of which you have heard so much. And it may be that in part I have not been misjudged. But that my faith has been shaken—that I have wavered for an instant in my trust in Allah and his prophet—this you could not have believed !”

“ I have not believed it, Ali,” replied the old man.

“ You know me, father, you are not like yon slaves, that hover around the court, who have no faith in others because they have it not in themselves. In this am I pure before God. Of prayer and ablutions I have neglected none that are enjoined upon us by our religion. Wine I have not touched, nor looked upon with desire, even when it flowed like water, and the vile dogs steeped their senses in it, nor has forbidden food passed my lips, although oftentimes bread alone must appease my hunger, and I must endure the scorn and wonder of the Giaour. I can still send a prayer to Allah whom alone I worship, and call upon the name of his prophet and say—“ Praise be unto God who begetteth not, neither is begotten, who hath no partner in his kingdom, nor shall any one intercede with him but through his good pleasure ! But my fortune, father, was most strange,” continued Ali, after a short pause. “ When I left in such haste the camp of the Christians, guided by the counsel of that knight who aided my escape, I betook me to the castle of an Hungarian lord, the father of this maiden of whom I have spoken. Here, masked and unknown, I was thrown into the closest converse with her. I was her companion in hall and bower, and in many a walk over the meadow, and by the river’s side. Then was it that my bosom”—Ali checked himself. He saw the cloud that gathered again over the features of the sage, and he added only—“ but it was a dream, father, and hath passed—passed for ever !”

Abdallah had listened with feelings of a mingled nature. It was plain to him that Ali’s heart had been deeply moved by the beauty or arts of this Christian maiden, and a pang of offended pride passed through his bosom as he remembered his darling Leilah. But he saw with gladness that his faith was unshaken, and that he still clung to the religion of his country. “ Time will bring a cure,” thought the sage. “ The influence of love upon the soul or upon the senses loses soon its power, when nourished only by the memory. Was thy passion favored ?” asked the old man, after a short silence, during which he had indulged in these reflections.

A smile like the red glow of evening when the sun has gone, lighted up the

features of the young Moslem ; a smile, not of hope, but of desire, of an ardent wish, and he replied—"How often have I asked that question of myself, and how often have I answered it, now to my delight, and now to my despair, and still it stood before me like a hard problem that I had no power to solve. Yet when I consider all, I believe not that I held a lasting interest in her bosom, although at times she smiled most kindly on me. By Allah, she seemed as it were to sit upon Love's throne wielding all his fires, but for herself, untouched, unscathed. No, good Abdallah,—I have no hope !"

"It is well the maiden was thus coy," replied the old man. "Who can tell whither this passion might have led thee ? Thou dost owe thanks to Allah who has kept thee from this snare."

"I thank him daily, father, for his goodness to me. But now do I need thy best counsel. Thou hast heard how this knight, the noblest, worthiest of men, is about to suffer in my behalf. I cannot leave him to perish. Tell me in what way I can best secure his safety."

"Nay, this thou canst not do—this is impossible in any wise."

"Cannot ! say not so, good Abdallah. By Allah, I will give myself into the hands of the Giaours, his countrymen, rather than a hair of his head should fall. While still within their reach I would have done this, though it had proved my ruin. Yet, this—thus did those think who were friends to him—even this, would not have served to aid him. But I am now here, beyond their power, and can make conditions with the dogs."

"But thou art not beyond the power of the sultan, nor beyond the reach of the divan. Believest thou they will suffer an Osmanli of rank, a Pacha, to be given up, to save the life of a Christian, after their treachery and falsehood ! Dost thou believe this ?"

"But what am I that they should set this worth upon me ? What is my life that they should regard it ?"

"Thou hast borne the standard and ensigns of a Pacha, and these they will not suffer to be dishonored. For thy life, there are some in Edernes who place slight value upon it. If thou art weary of it, plead in behalf of this Infidel before the divan. Say in that awful assembly that the safety of a Giaour is of more moment to thee than the welfare and honor of Islam ; that in this tempest of war which now threatens the land, thy only thought is the life of a dog—then return to thy house, repeat thy last prayer, and wait for a black eunuch, or the Capoudji Baschi, to bring the bowstring as thy reward."

"Yet I will speak for him, nevertheless," said Ali, quickly. "Under some form, some plea, I will strive for the life of this man. By Allah, I might take with me a bold band of Spahis, and by force or stratagem set him free from his danger—yes, and it may be, strike a good blow for our faith."

"And wilt thou receive thanks from him for this ?" asked Abdallah. "Canst thou restore to him his rank, his good name in his own land, or will he take the turban, and ride with thee under the shadow of the crescent, and draw the cimeter against his brethren ? Remember likewise, there are many

here, some of the highest, who esteem thee little less than a traitor. Will they trust thee, then, with men and arms, for so wild and hazardous a project? It is foolishness to think it. Nay; scarcely wilt thou thyself find a way to depart from the city. Watchful eyes will be upon thee. In secret, under cover of the night, must thou steal away, and who can doubt but to thy ruin?"

"To this, then, shall I be driven," was the reply; "and I will take with me some bold spirits of my own household. There are these would ride into the yawning pit, did I call them and lead the way. For my own ruin I will not think of it. God is great and merciful, and to him do I commit my safety."

"Ali," exclaimed the old man, much moved, "thou hast been as a son to me. I have watched thee with the care of a father; I have guided thy steps in the ways of virtue, and have instructed thee in all things which a good Moslem should know. From thy very childhood, from the moment when thou wast first placed in my hands till now, my chief thought has been thy welfare; and I have taken much counsel in my breast for thee, when thou didst sleep and didst think of nothing less than this. And until this hour my toil has not been in vain. Dost thou not owe me somewhat then, some return for this love? I thought I had already been repaid by thy virtue, thy success—but grant me one thing—spare thyself, thy life to me."

Then Ali drew the hand of the old man to his lips, and placing his head upon his breast, said, while the tears came into his eyes, "My teacher, my good Abdallah, I am thine, thy son Ali, as of old."

"Thou art my Ali, as of old," exclaimed the sage, interrupting him, and kissing him upon his forehead, "and thou wilt heed these tears, thou wilt turn thee from this path?"

"My life is indeed thine," answered Ali. "but thou wouldst not save it to thee by this. Should I suffer this knight to perish, him who from his own nobleness took this peril upon him, his image would follow me forever. My life would become a shadow of no worth to myself nor thee. I should have no peace until I had thrown it away in some hot encounter—no rest until I had found rest among the slain."

"My son, thy heart is pure," answered the sage; "but for a good Moslem, thou art too much bound up in the safety of this Giaour. Examine well. Is the peril indeed so great? He is in the hands of those of his own faith; it cannot be that they will push their severity so far as to affect his life."

"Oh, thou dost not know the falsehood, the cruelty of those men. With them religion is but a name, a cloak for those crimes which honor and justice rebuke with all mankind. It is not as with us the life-stream of our bosoms, the air, the light, without which we are nothing. I have observed them with watchful eyes, and it has not escaped me that he has bitter foes among his own brethren—foes who have power to crush him. But, by the Prophet, they shall be foiled! Therefore am I here, therefore must I return and put my life to the hazard, and thine aid, father, shall help me."

"But is there not more in this?" said Abdallah, anxiously. "Is it not his Christian maiden who draws thee from us again?"

"While I speak I do not think of her. Let me but save yon knight, and will return, never to look upon her again."

"What is the danger to which this Christian is exposed? thou hast not mentioned it," said the old man.

"The ordeal of boiling water," answered Ali. "He must with his naked hand—such is their strange custom—he must take from a vessel of boiling water, a stone which is suspended therein. Should the limb be uninjured, he is innocent; but should it be scathed by the heated liquid, then he is straightway adjudged guilty, and condemned as a traitor."

"The ways of Allah are wonderful!" exclaimed the sage, raising his hands towards heaven.

"What meanst thou by that, father?—by those words, that smile?" exclaimed the young Moslem quickly, and with great emotion.

"If I smiled I knew it not," was the reply. "My mind turned upon the great goodness and bounty of Providence toward His creatures, and I thought that in this straight, also, Allah would not desert His children."

"Nay, it was more than this," said Ali Pacha. "Thou art wise, father, when was there a need or a danger, and thou knowest not counsel for it?"

"Be calm, my son," said the old man. "Thou art sure of my aid, if aid is in my power. But another trial awaits thee. The divan will soon assemble, where thou must appear to declare thy tidings. Change then thine apparel, cleanse thy person from all impurities, and go with the courage which a pure heart alone can give, to meet that dread assembly."

"Father, I place myself in thy hands. Thy glance has given me strength and hope again. I will go to the divan, and fear not that I shall tremble before it."

"Bear thyself humbly. Remember, the stain of treason shadows thy name."

"I shall not, then, take my seat with the other lords in the council?" inquired Ali Pacha.

"Be not so presumptuous, so rash, my son."

"Yet is it mine by right. I am still a Pacha of the highest rank. The sultan has not yet recalled my standard."

"As thou wilt; let Heaven guide thee, and thine own heart. And when the divan is over, come to my dwelling. Thou shalt have thy wish—thou shalt see Leilah again. The sight of her old companion will be a cordial to her malady."

After Abdallah had taken his departure, Ali laid aside his armor, and entered the bath. On coming out therefrom he put on Turkish robes of great richness, as became his rank, which the care of his slaves had provided for him, wound the turban about his head, and girded a cimeter at his side. This done, he repeated his devotions, stepped with a lighter heart from his *house*, and bent his way towards the imperial Serai.

## CHAPTER XX

## THE MEETING.

THE return of Ali Pacha brought much joy to the good Abdallah. Far different was it, however, with Leilah. She had watched faithfully for him. From her old station at the lattice she had looked long and sadly over the hills, awaiting his return from Hungary. He came not, however, like the star of her hope, but rather as a baleful meteor, threatening and foreboding. When she saw him ride over the brow of the hill, clothed in the hated garb of the Infidel, then her heart sank within her. For the first moment, it is true, a thrill of pleasure darted through her frame, at the sight of him whose coming she had so long wished for, but then came the conviction of his apostacy, of his loss to her, to himself, and to his country. The thought at first seemed to benumb her faculties, and she remained bewildered and speechless until he had disappeared in the adjacent valley. Then she arose, left her accustomed place, passed trembling to the opposite side of the apartment, where she threw herself upon the divan, and covered her face with her hands. She did not weep, or but a few tears moistened her eyes, but she sobbed violently, and her bosom was oppressed by a strange and hitherto unknown sensation, which she could not throw off, nor yet completely yield to.

It was thus that Abdallah found her after his return from the abode of Ali. He knew well the cause of her emotion, although she did not speak of it. He tried to soothe her with kind words, but these seemed of no avail, and he essayed to lend her the best efforts of his skill. He prepared for her medicines of a narcotic quality, the rich opiate confection, to calm and restore her to herself, and then left her to repose. The fumes of the soothing drug mounted to her brain, and though they brought no sleep with them, yet their influence was grateful and salutary. She became more composed, a pleasant warmth diffused itself through her limbs, her bosom was lighter, she breathed freely, and her heart beat cheerfully as of old. She arose from her couch, stepped with a light step to her accustomed seat by the fountain, and gave herself to her meditations. And she sat there hours long, wrapped in joyful thoughts, and so deeply that she heeded it not when the slave opened the door of her apartment to see if she had left her couch, and was prepared to receive the greetings of the friend of her youthful days. And as she sat longer, and the pleasing drug poured itself through her veins, her visions became more delightful. All things around her were tinged with the brightest colors; she was a queen, a conquering houri, and Ali's love was bound in the ringlets of her hair.

But it was not on this earth that she was thus happy. She was wandering in paradise, and threading its varied mazes, its labyrinth of verdant walks, beneath its cool trees, where green birds were singing, and around the clear



lake, from which believers slake their pleasant thirst. She took up the goblets of precious stones and drank, and was refreshed. Where now was there a happier creature than she? there was here no hostile creed, no Christian rival, no doubt nor jealous fear, and she took her lute and sang a hymn of praise, and that hymn was a song of love, a well-known song.

Allah, who framed the stream and ocean's flood,  
 And stars that in their orbits never tire,  
 He poured within my veins this restless blood,  
 Kindled the spark thy breath hath blown to fire.  
 But shall this flame that burns within my soul  
 Cease, when the stars shall fade and seas forget to roll?  
 Let the wise Mollah say with reverent air  
 That with this being I must cease to be,  
 That bright-eyed maidens shall await thee there  
 But that there is no paradise for me;  
 Oh, I have read the word, read it with still delight  
 And love hath lent its aid, and faith to give me sight.  
 When heavenly hours welcome thee at last,  
 I shall appear in all that happy throng,  
 If thou hast loved me here, thou'lt greet the past,  
 A past not for eternity too long.  
 Clasp whom thou wilt—look! thou dost clasp me there,  
 Voice, eye and lip, as thou hast known me here.

And she strayed further, looking for him whom she loved beyond all others, and he stood not far off, clothed no longer in the armor of the Giaours, but with the turban on his brow, and in the beautiful robes of his faith. She called his name. "Ali," she exclaimed, with a low, sweet voice, and—strange that the vision is so distinct, so vivid—she hears her own name. "Leilah" from those well-known lips. She turned—Ali was indeed standing before her, dressed as she had pictured him to herself, in the robes of his own land. The fancies of her enkindled brain mingled with the realities of the present. She arose, a flush of joy hurried across her features. "Ali, thou art here once more," she exclaimed, and coming forward, threw herself into his arms. And the young Pacha opened his arms to receive her: her lips touched his for a moment, her bosom, round and swelling like the pomegranate, rested against his own, and then her head sank drooping upon his shoulder. When she raised her face to seek the glance of her lover, her eye was bright, her features colored with emotion, and she looked beautiful as the young day. "I knew I should not miss thee here," she said, and at the same moment her eye fell upon her father, who was hastening forward to take her from Ali's embrace.

His countenance exhibited marks of anger and vexation, and he exclaimed, "In the name of the Prophet, what means this madness? but her brain is turned with drugs."

Leilah started, looked wildly around, passed her hand more than once across her brow and eyes, like one waking from a dream, and then turned from Ali to throw herself into the arms of her father. But the former seemed carried beyond himself, or as if he had from her touch imbibed the influence of those medicines; he clasped the maiden more closely to him, nor would he release her until he felt the hand of Abdallah upon his own, and heard his voice exclaiming—"Why wilt thou put this shame upon me? unloose the girl! away! wait for me in my chamber, and account to me for this folly." Then, confused, muttering uncertain words, not knowing what he should do or say, the young Moslem hastily left the apartment.

"What means this, Leilah?" said her father, when they were alone, looking upon her with a severe and angry countenance. "Must I fear that thou hast abused my confidence. When I have allowed thee all freedom, such as custom permits not with us, can it be that thou hast trifled with my mildness. I remember thou didst speak of one secret meeting. By the beard of my father, this touches me closely."

"Do not frown, my father, nor be angry with me. Those medicines had unhinged my reason. But what will he believe; what will my lord Ali Pacha believe of me?"

"Thou dost not ask what I, thy father, think of this folly," replied the old man.

"Alas, how am I humbled!" exclaimed the maiden, covering her burning face with her hands. "What shame and self-reproach fill my bosom? Yet there is no deceit in my heart. Thou knowest its inmost recesses, it has been open to thy view as though the light of day were poured in upon its secrets, and thine eye could read them as if written in a book. I have not seen Michal Ali but when and where, as I have told thee. It was yon drug, father, that moved me thus. It mounted to my brain, and filled my soul with strange and pleasant dreams. Methought I was in paradise, wandering amid its shades, and looking for him who was dear to me. And it seemed as if no fear, no shame controlled me; I was raised above those feelings which rule us so strongly here upon this earth. I wished that I could but find him and say, 'See Ali, here is thy Leilah who loves thee, and thou hast been so long from her.' And when I saw him and called him by his name, and he answered me, I thought not that I was upon the earth, but in paradise—in the abodes of the blest."

"I can easily believe it," replied Abdallah, with a smile of doubtful meaning; "and Ali, he also seemed for the moment possessed with the same fancy, forgetting his sins."

At these words Leilah burst into a flood of tears. "Thou wilt then punish me thus, my father?" she said; "thou wilt not forgive me? But it is over, the vision is gone, and thou wilt see if I prove myself thus weak again."

"I have good hope of it," said the sage. "I think in truth I should not pass by so lightly a second folly like this."

"Nay, I mean not this dream," answered the maiden, "thy medicines must bear the fault of this; and yet they have but disclosed what for a long time has remained unspoken in my bosom. I mean this passion—I will name it thus now that I renounce it—this love which I have nourished towards one who never asked nor sought it of me. When I think how the past weeks have flown, how I have sat dreaming away the hours, and of whom, of what dreaming! I feel abased and humbled to the dust; yet have I much excuse. It came so secretly upon me, concealed and masked under the guise of sisterly love; for were we not brought up together, have we not been companions from our youth?"

"Wouldst thou reproach me with this?" said Abdallah: "yet thou hast cause. I am older and should have been wiser."

"It was not in my thoughts," replied the maiden. "But if thou believest father, that in part the fault is thine, if thou hast given occasion to this folly, aid me to subdue it. Let me leave this chamber where every thing reminds me of him; let me leave my books, my lute, all—all that serves to foster a weakness which I will henceforth forget."

"Thou wilt thus become mine own child again," said Abdallah, drawing her to his bosom, and smiling at the earnestness with which she spoke.

"I would be busy too, and active. I would wander in the gardens, work at my embroidery, and leave not an idle moment for my thoughts to stray backward to the past. Is not this the way by which I may reach my purpose?"

"Thou dost speak as one well skilled in the secret workings of the heart," replied the old man. "But wilt thou not see Ali Pacha again? once again ere he leaves us?"

"Whither goes he?"

"Toward Hungary, to the camp of the Christians."

"Why? when? for what purpose goes he thither? Merciful Allah! is it so? Is his love stronger than his faith? Will the beauty of an infidel maiden render him forgetful of his country and religion?"

"Is this thy firmness, Leilah? Thy cheek is pale, and thou dost tremble with emotion."

"Nay I cannot subdue my heart at once. Wait but a little time, and thou shalt see, father, if I prove untrue to myself. Yes, I would behold him before he leaves us, partly to look upon him once again ere he goes upon this journey, which cannot be without danger; but more that he may learn how I have raised myself above this weakness, that he may not think lightly of me, and depart with scorn in his bosom, in place of that kindly esteem which I would still have him feel toward me."

"Be it so, then. It suits with my purpose. He will go upon this journey, not lured by the charms of an infidel maiden, as thou sayest, but to save the life of one who at some risk treated him nobly, and for this fell into suspicion with his countrymen, and is now imprisoned, expecting a dreadful fate.

He cannot be kept back, although the project is not free from peril in Hungary, as well as here at home. I have some counsel to give him which may serve him at his need. This thou shalt in my place impart to him, to-night in my chamber, whither he will come after the hour of evening prayer. Let Fatima be with thee, but not so near as to overhear thy words. I myself have business with the Vizier—business of moment, which may detain me for some hours in the night. But bear thyself well that he may forget this scene of paradise, and as thou hast said, not think lightly of thee. And now, my child, to thy couch ! thine eyes are heavy with sleep."

"Not here, not in this chamber. No, from this moment, bid farewell to it, farewell until the hours are happier !" She went with emotion toward her favorite window, stood there for a moment gazing upon the scene which lay before her, and then closed the lattice. From this she stepped to her accustomed seat near the fountain, bathed her hands in its waters, placed them wet upon her brow, pressed her lute to her bosom, took the flower from the scroll, kissed it, replaced it, and then with an unmoved countenance turned her back upon her old apartment. Abdallah wondered to see her resolution as he accompanied her to her new chamber, and thanking Allah, who bringeth good out of evil, left her with an embrace, and words of encouragement, and sought the young Moslem in his own apartment.

But he was not there. He had wandered forth into the gardens, scarcely master of his feelings, such was the crowd of emotions which this day had disturbed his bosom. Here the old man found him seated upon the rich clean grass, with his head resting in his hands. As he raised his face, he saw that Abdallah's brow was lighter than he looked to find it, and he asked, "Well, good Abdallah, how is it with Leilah ?"

"Hush ! not a word more thereupon," said the old man. "Let it pass with the other follies which are not rare at this time. The drug should have composed her to sleep, but the wine of the Infidel could not have worked most strangely ; then must the foolish one go walking in a dream in paradise, believe herself a houri, and I know not what madness beside. Thus it came—but let us forget it, and tell me of thy reception at the divan, which thine impatience to see the girl, left thee no time to relate."

"Ha ! now that thou dost recall it to me !" exclaimed the young Moslem. "By the life of Mahomet, all passed happily and strangely ! I spoke not of this journey into Hungary."

"It was well, by the beard of my father, it was well thou didst not ; but tell me more. How were you welcomed by the lords, by the Mouphti, the Vizier ?"

"When you left me," commenced Ali, "I washed and prayed, put on my robes of ceremony, such as I now wear, and bent my steps toward the Serai. I know not from what cause—whether from the hope you gave me, or that I was clothed in our own garments once again, after having been for weeks cased in yonder accursed harness—but so it was—once more beneath the turban I breathed freely, my bosom was lighter, I had a confidence and a

courage which for a long time I had not known ; nay I felt without sin as without fear, and could have faced the sultan in his deadliest anger. I walked onward through the streets of the city, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, for I met many that were once friendly to me who seemed now estranged, and those who were still the same I would bring into no disgrace for their fidelity. Thus I arrived at the Serai, passed under the peristyles of the ante-chamber, where the most distinguished lords of the court were in attendance, and the Janissaries drawn up, as is the custom, upon the assembling of the council. All looked with wonder, but no one took much trouble to accost me, or speak a friendly word, and wish me, joy that I had returned from the power of the infidels. I, myself, as you will believe, did not desire to disturb them. Pride swelled in my heart, and I walked onward as if I had been the grand Vizier, nay, the sultan himself, may his steps be blessed. When I entered the divan all were assembled. I had not forgotten my old place at the left of the Vizier, and stepped forward—”

“But not thus boldly, not with that—”

“Nay, good Abdallah, did I not know that I was in the presence of the Sultan ? I cast a glance upward to the latticed window at which he sits, and saw his dark eye gleaming from behind it. My courage did not falter ; I took my seat without fear, and then looked around to scan the features of those about me. All were grave and stately, and seemed as if they observed me not, only in the face of Khalil I thought I saw a smile, certain is it at least, his countenance was benign and mild, which not a little reassured me—though how he should anticipate my tidings, or be pleased thereat, I cannot easily imagine.”

“He has a quick glance,” said Abdallah, smiling, “little passes around him that he does not penetrate.”

“The seals of the archives were then examined,” continued Ali Pacha, “the writings read, and various subjects spoken of which required counsel and deliberation. But as yet, not a word was said of my tidings, for no one would seem impatient and wanting in due gravity, which is not like the foolish custom of the Christians. At last Khalil questioned me of the news from Buda. I related then all I had to say, the breaking of the truce, the purposea inroad upon our provinces, the powerful force of the Christians, all indeed which could arouse the attention of the divan, and you may believe I did not lessen the danger ; its extent, its imminence were pictured with my best words.”

“Was aught said of the Sultan ? of Amurath, of the turbulent Janissaries ?”

“No word was spoken of them. The usual orders for the troops, supplies for men and arms—these were all which received the attention of the council.”

“And the leaders ?” inquired Abdallah. “As Bey of these provinces, thou thyself shouldst be one of them or nothing.”

"They were not named," was the reply. "This, as I think, will rest with the Sultan alone."

"Ali!" exclaimed the old man, "thou dost stand upon the verge of a precipice. Were it not for the good friendship of the Vizier Khalil, the bowstring had already been about thy neck."

"Sayst thou so, father?" exclaimed the young Moslem, changing colour. "But Allah be praised, I was prepared for all. Thou wouldst have found me again yonder in paradise. Yet, how knowest thou this, good Abdallah?"

"I have seen the Vizier since I left thy dwelling this morning," replied Abdallah. "He is firm in the opinion that Mahomet must resign the sceptre into the hands of his father. Ere now he had accomplished it, and named the leaders in this war, but for my entreaties, for thou mayst easily see that this would have decided thy fate also."

"But how, and by what means could he induce the fiery Mahomet to lay aside his power?"

"Oh, he is wise and crafty, and will labor with his whole soul when the good of Islamism demands it of him. But now, no more of this. Look to thine own safety. Get thee from the city without delay under cover of the night. Yet ere thou goest, Ali, come once more hither—after night-fall, and secretly. I will then give thee my counsel as to this knight—the means it may be to procure his safety."

Ali arose, embraced the good old man, and together they found their way into his dwelling. He here parted from him confused and agitated, knowing his danger, and turned his steps towards his own abode.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE CASKET.

EVENING was throwing soft shadows over the earth, the stars one by one were coming forth from the deep chamber of their rest, as Michal Ali bent his way once more toward the dwelling of Abdallah. The city was assuming gradually the stillness of night. But few were in the street to observe or to impede his steps, and hurrying onward, scarcely casting a glance around him, he soon found himself before that well-known abode. The slave who admitted him, guided him in silence across the court, and led him into a large hall, aside from the common apartments of the building. His guide then retired, leaving him alone. In a few moments a door at the opposite end of the hall was opened, and to his surprise Leilah entered, attended by a female slave. Her face was still pale, but the feebleness of her frame seemed to have diminished, for she walked with a firm step, and although her motions appeared constrained and measured, yet they were not devoid of dignity.

Ali could not well understand the expression of her features as she greeted him, and with a quiet gesture motioned him to sit near her upon the divan. He thought, however, that he could discern some confusion in her manner as she prepared to address him, that her first efforts indeed for this purpose were ineffectual, and concealed by more than one little artifice as she adjusted her robe, or arranged the cushions upon which rested her beautiful feet in their embroidered sandals. "It was thy father, Leilah," thus he began, mistaking these slight signs of emotion, "it was thy father whom I looked to find here. He is not here—he is in some other chamber. It is an error of the slave's."

"Nay, there is no error, my lord," she answered. "My father is away—is with the Vizier Khalil."

"They should be affairs of some moment that call him thus unexpectedly," said Ali, "for at this hour I should find him here, he said. When will he return?"

"Scarcely before midnight, of such weight is the business which detains him; thus much I gathered from his words. Why dost thou frown, my lord?"

"I also have business with him of no slight moment," replied the young Moslem. "Leilah, I am about to leave Ederneh."

"Of this I have heard, my lord. When is it thy purpose to depart?"

"To-night—ere the morning dawn. An errand calls me, a voice to which I must listen, calls me to the camp of the Christians. A task of no slight difficulty and danger lies before me, one to which I of myself am unequal. For this is it that I seek thy father, that his counsel may aid me."

"I know thee too well, my lord," replied the maiden, "to doubt that this danger has charms, or, at least, no terrors for thee. But shouldst thou not reflect, if in the path thou art about to tread, there lurks no peril to thine honor, to thy faith as a pious Moslem? laying aside all thoughts of those dear to thee, of dependants, slaves of thy household, who will all share in thy misfortunes, if such should come upon thee."

"This hast thou from thy father, Leilah," exclaimed Ali, quickly, "for how shouldst thou know of danger to my faith, or of any other that a good warrior is not ever ready to encounter? But can it be?—would he thus deceive me?—would he delay my going until it be too late, and send thee, Leilah, in his stead, as one whose voice hath most power to persuade me?"

The brow of the young maiden kindled, and her eye beamed with pride, as she said, "Think not thus unjustly of my father; his soul is above deceit. neither doth he attribute to me that power which you believe."

Ali gazed upon her in admiration, smiled, and answered: "Yet he would not err, did he thus judge. By Allah, I know not if there be another voice which could so move me as thine; for art thou not my old companion, the Leilah of my youth?"

The voice of the maiden did not tremble as she answered, although an eye more cool and observing than that of Ali's would have seen that her bosom heaved irregularly and quickly. "I am not here, my lord, to listen to words

like these," she said, "neither to dissuade, or hold thee back from this dangerous journey; nay, rather to aid and assist thee in thy purpose."

"Thou, Leilah! thou aid me! Aye, thou wilt bless me, thou wilt assure me of thy daily prayers in my behalf."

"Oh, this will I indeed do," replied the maiden, "but I meant it not so. There is a knight in the Christian camp, who for thee hath exposed himself to deadly peril, whom a fearful ordeal must number among the condemned, or give back to life and to honor; him thou wouldst rescue, although at the hazard of thine own safety. This I learned from my father. He told me also much of the origin and history of these ordeals; how that in earlier times they were in use among the nations of the East; but soon the art of man, mingling in their mysteries, and for favor of gold, controlling them at will, now prospering the guilty, now sentencing the innocent, they were abolished by those wise people, and found their way into the West. Here they are still practiced, nay, in such esteem are they, that they are revered by many as the voice of Heaven, for Allah doth not give alike to all nations wisdom and understanding. But although these ordeals have long since been disused in Eastern lands, yet the tradition of them still remains among the learned, and some of the wisest of our sages have preserved amid the treasures of their lore, various charms and secrets by which they may be endured with safety. Even that of fire, the most fearful of all, by this means loses its terrors."

"Allah is merciful!" exclaimed the young Moslem, not waiting for her to conclude. "Who but thy father is the wisest in the land? Who holds these secrets, if it be not he? And he has some charm, some spell or talisman, which can protect against this ordeal?"

Leilah beckoned to Fatima, who advanced, and placed in her hand a small oblong casket or box of polished sandal wood. She touched a concealed spring, and the lid of the casket flew back, displaying to view a vessel of glass curiously wrought, the mouth of which was closed and sealed. It was filled with a transparent liquid, so pure and colorless, as scarcely to be visible through the crystal vessel which contained it. Ali gazed in breathless silence. "There is no magic in it," said Leilah, smiling. "No forbidden arts have distilled this potent fluid; the toil of the wise alchemist alone was it, which wrested the secret from the hands of nature."

"And this will protect the frame against fire, against the heat of boiling water or of molten lead?" exclaimed the young Moslem, scarce trusting his senses. "Must it be worn as a talisman, or swallowed, or how must it be used? "Those and other questions burst from the lips of the uncertain, yet delighted Ali.

"It must be poured upon the body," was the reply, "upon the hand or foot, or whatsoever part is to be subjected to the flame. Thrice before the trial, let yonder knight bathe his arm to the elbow with this liquid, and he need not fear. Such are the words of my father."

"Can it be," said Ali, speaking in a whisper, while he eyed the vessel attentively, and turned it on all sides between him and the lamp which hung



near them, "can it be that its virtue is so great? It is without color and resembles water—is this sure, Leilah; for an error may cost the life of the noblest of men?"

"As sure as I now speak with thee, and give the casket into thy keeping. Protected by this, one may handle liquid iron, and take a stone from a vessel of boiling water as safely as lift the pebble which shines at the bottom of a fountain."

"Nay, so potent is it?" exclaimed Ali: "Leliah, I am bewildered. All sounds to me like the tales of wonder, of genii and enchantment, which some of our slaves know so well how to recount to us. I feel as if carried back to ages long past, when magicians and the spirits under their control mingled in the common concerns of life, and seemed to sport with the destinies of men. But herein lies no magic, thou sayst, and I will believe it, although, how the mere arts of man could arrive at such wonders, I cannot easily imagine." As the young Moslem received the casket from the hands of Leilah, he showed some signs of fear, and he pronounced the name of Allah, and invoked his aid against all evil spirits, and against Satan, "driven away with stones." He then secured it carefully in the folds of his vest, and added: "I shall go hence with a lighter heart than I came; thanks to thy goodness, Leilah, and the wisdom of thy father; for I know now that I shall bring aid to him in his hour of trial, who afforded it to me when I had none to look to but Allah."

"Go, my lord," was the reply, "go and fulfil this errand which lies so near thy heart—yet forget not those whom thou dost leave behind; forget not thyself, Ali; but return to be once more the defence and glory of our faith."

"Doubt it not, Leilah. I will see this knight, place this casket in his hands, and then turning back forever upon Christian lands—forever; unless I visit them, cimeter in hand, and at the bidding of my master."

"Comes this from thy heart, my lord, or dost thou speak thus to relieve our fears, to quiet those bosoms whose hopes are wrapped up in thy welfare?"

"From my heart, Leilah. Whence hast thou these doubts?"

"Have we not cause, Ali Pacha? But I will not bring back the past. Grant me only this prayer—though the ties be strong which draw thee from us, forget not thy country, nor the religion which thou hast professed. If thy heart is bound to a maiden of another faith—if thou canst have no happiness but with her—bring her hither with thee. There is no one who can reproach thee for this step. The great Morad has himself given this example to his subjects. Return with her and be happy. But remember thou art a Moslem, and thy home is beneath the shadow of the house of Othman."

"Dost thou think that I need this warning?" said Ali, his face clouding with grief. "Dost thou also, Leilah, do me this wrong? Whence comest thou by this suspicion?"

"Oh, have not I also heard? But let the future repair the errors of the past. Go, prosper in thine undertaking, rescue this knight, and return hither

with the maiden of thy heart—return to thy home and happiness.”

“I shall return alone,” replied the young Moslem, sadly, “but not to happiness, if thy bosom is estranged from me.”

“As of old, Ali, I will love thee,” replied the maiden, “as of old when we wandered children together, when each hour brought its pleasure, when hope and regret seemed to have no being for us. And if we meet not as in times past, for this must have an end, yet I will pray for thy happiness, and ever remember thee as one near of kin.” An infinite charm was breathed over her features, the tones of her voice, and each motion of her form, as she uttered these words. They sounded like sad music when it departs farther and farther from us, and leaves us at last with its tones ringing in our ears. Then sit we down and weep, for we hear in those lingering notes the echoes of our past steps, and we tread in fancy the old path again.

“There was a time, Leilah,” answered Ali, “when I hoped for more than this, though my lips have been silent to thee. But I will speak now, now ere we part.”

“I cannot listen to thee,” she exclaimed, rising from her seat, and scarce trusting herself to look upon him.

“Why art thou thus fearful—thus cold toward me? I looked not for this! To-day when I held thee in these arms—”

“Be noble, oh, my lord!” she interrupted him with a beseeching glance. “Misjudge not the fancies of a bewildered brain, or at least, wound not mine ears with the utterance of thy thoughts.”

“But leave me not thus coldly,” he exclaimed, throwing himself at her feet. “I will cast away my hopes, but go not thus. Let me thank thee, let me bless thee ere I depart, and do thou bid me farewell as in times past.” But she was not to be detained. When Ali had raised his head from the suppliant posture into which he had thrown himself, she was already at the door of the chamber. Leaning upon her attendant, she cast a last glance at the prostrate Ali; she did not speak, yet in that look she uttered what he had asked, a friendly and sad farewell. The next moment she was gone.

The young Moslem arose, his first impulse was to follow her, but he durst not. He then buried his face in his hands, and gave himself a prey to contending thoughts. His life in the camp of the Christians, his passion for Bertha, and the hopelessness of that passion, now rushed across his mind—and then, his beloved Leilah, her former affection, and her present unwonted coldness. Those whom he most loved seemed averse to him; he found himself in a labyrinth of emotions, he scarcely knew what to hope or to wish. He felt fallen also in his own esteem, he was sensible of an inconstancy of feeling and of purpose, which brought no honor to his character, and he was humbled to find himself so much the sport instead of the master of his fortune. His hand now pressed against the casket which was concealed in his bosom. This recalled him to himself. The danger of the Walachian, his proposed journey to the Christian camp, and the hopes he carried with him thither,

stood clearly before his soul. He fell upon his face and thanked Allah for his goodness, then rose and left the chamber and the dwelling.

He passed the gates of the outer court of the Serai, hurried on through the deserted streets, and in a few moments arrived at his own abode. He entered, and having commanded his horse to be held in readiness, went to his chamber, and clothed himself once more in steel armor. Over this he threw a wide robe or caftan of white silk, to conceal it from the eyes of the citizens, and he did not remove his turban, but carried his helmet in his hand. When he had descended into the court, he found his steed awaiting him, and was about to mount into the saddle, when some one plucked him by the robe. He turned, and beheld Abdallah standing near him.

"Thou art hasty in thy movements," said the old man, "yet not too hasty. Hast thou the casket?"

"Aye, good Abdallah; it is here, well secured at my girdle. I can be sure of its power?"

"My life for it Ali," replied the sage. "And now delay no longer, for danger lurks for thee here in Ederneh."

"From whence, father? from the sultan, from the divan?"

"Many things have changed face since this morning, when thou didst ride into the city. Mahomet will resign the sceptre, and a deputation from the divan sets forward to-morrow toward Brousa, to commit it into the hands of Morad."

"Can this be so?" exclaimed Ali, in wonder. "And by what means was this effected thus quickly?"

"It was not accomplished without artifice," replied Abdallah, "for he turned a deaf ear to all counsel. A certain dervish for whom he has much reverence prophesied that great fortune should follow from this step, that he should visit Ederneh once again as Sultan, be victorious over his enemies, and I know not what more of this kind."

"Herein do I see thy finger, father, and that of old Khalil."

"Inquire not too closely, my son. Above all, waste not the time in words. Mahomet is yet sultan for to-night, and will use his power to the destruction of his enemies."

"But why should he count me as an enemy?"

"By Allah!" said the sage, "didst thou not bring the tidings which wrung the sceptre from his hands, and there may be other reasons which thou knowest not of. Therefore speed thee. Place Mount Hemus between thee and this city before the day dawns. And that thou mayest suffer no delay," he continued, leading him onward a few steps, "I have provided thee with a good steed, such a one as thou wilt hardly find in thine own stables."

"Thanks, father, for thy care," said Ali, "but that which I have chosen is no sluggard, only is there one other to whose speed I would sooner trust myself in an hour of danger." Before them in the faint-starlight stood a beautiful Arabian, chafing in the hands of a slave. "By Allah, I should know that form," exclaimed Ali, advancing toward him. The good steed

knew the voice of his master, and neighed aloud. "It is Zeinab! Father, with what magic dost thou work?" In a moment the young Moslem was in the saddle, and having fastened before him the helmet which he bore in his hand, he said, "How well do I know this seat—it wanted but this. I have now a friend with me upon the way." He turned to bid Abdallah farewell, when the slave, whom he had not recognized, clasped his arms about his knees. It was Youssouf. There was no time, however, for question or reply; urged by the old man, after a hasty embrace, he spurred onward, and was soon without the gates of the city. His good steed bore him swiftly on, and he did not check him in his speed, until he reached the height which has before been described to the reader. He here paused, and turned to take a last view of Ederneh. He saw the Serai, with the lights glancing from its windows, and with difficulty traced out the abode of Abdallah. But the chamber of Leilah was dark; not a single taper beamed from that quarter of the dwelling. A strange desire oppressed his bosom, the blood burned in his veins, his lips breathed forth sighs, and he stretched his arms towards the city, as though he would clasp her to his heart. "Farewell!" he said, when he could find words. "Leilah, farewell! Beautiful art thou as an houri of paradise! Allah give thee sweet dreams, and lighten thy cares!"

As on the banks of the Danube, in the night, he bade adieu to Bertha, so was he now here with the same emotions, standing beneath the stars, and uttering farewell to another. He knew not what had so changed him; whether it were that kiss of yesterday, which was still glowing upon his cheek, or that warm embrace with which she had enfolded him; or was it not the new relation in which she stood towards him? was it not her coldness, her lately gained indifference, by which, as it were, she had placed herself above him? Was it not these which had given her his unwonted power over his heart. He could not answer. His life had been spent in action, and he had not yet learned to reflect upon himself. But as he journeyed onward, and the distance diminished between himself and the Christian camp, he found his thoughts more occupied with Bertha. Her image came oftener to his remembrance, he oftener mused upon her beauty, and the band seemed hourly less strong which bound him to his home. Thus strangely inconstant was his temper. And still those might err who should charge him with fickleness beyond the ordinary lot of man. His heart was like the needle of the mariner, when moved by the influence of two equal magnets. By each is it in turn attracted, as either is more near or more remote, and still is the needle true in its inconstancy; still is it the same hidden power which sways it; still is nature steadfast in her own unalterable laws. Who will say, then, that the heart of Ali was not constant? He passed, for so fate had ordered it, to and fro between Buda and Ederneh, but his heart was firm and true—true to the first laws which Allah had imposed upon it; true to the mysterious power of loveliness and beauty.

## CHAPTER XXII.

FATHER ANTONIO.

WHILE the young Moslem is approaching the land of his enemies, let the reader go back with us and learn what, in the meanwhile, was passing at Buda. In view of the expected expedition against the Turks, the strength of Hungary and Poland was strained to the utmost. All private feuds were quieted; and those chiefs who in the council had most strenuously opposed the war, now when it had been resolved upon, lent their best efforts to urge on the preparations for the approaching campaign. Many foreign knights, however, had already left the camp. They had expected a more glorious, more decisive termination to the war; they murmured at the truce, and one by one had withdrawn their succore from the army. Yet, still, a gallant and well-appointed force had been drawn together, and day after day its numbers were increased, by the return of some good warrior who had heard of the purposed campaign, and burned to wield lance once more against the enemies of his faith. During this while, the young knight, in whose welfare we hope the reader has, by this time, a particular interest, was a prisoner under the custody of Huniades. In pursuance of the king's commands, he had been confined in the castle of the city, but his condition was alleviated by every indulgence which the ingenuity of his guardian and sponsor could devise. His solitude was often cheered by the presence of Huniades himself, nor was he denied the society of those who still took an interest in his fate.

Foremost among those was the old Baron Von Arnheim. His wounds were now for the most part healed, and the old man could ride over to Buda, and take part in the events of the day. Here he imparted counsel, there praise or blame; careless as he was by nature, he was not destitute of policy, and in advising, in approving or censuring the measures which had been taken, or were meditated, he knew how to give weight to his words: and now by bluntness, now by intrigue, to further the purpose which he had in view. This was to set aside the ordeal to which the Walachian had appealed. The wish that lay nearest his heart was, that the accused might make good his cause by meeting his adversaries in the lists, for he had unabounded confidence in the prowess of the young knight. Failing in this, he would have desired some ordinary form of judicature, that a council of the chiefs, or that Ladislaus himself should decide upon the guilt or innocence of the offender, and mete out a suitable punishment. The baron had, indeed, sufficient reason to believe, that the young knight's prisoners had escaped by his aid, or at least with his acquiescence; but he kept his own council, spoke loudly of innocence and oppression, and left no means untried to avert the dreaded trial. He was often seen in conference with Huniades, often among the

Walachian riders who served under the accused, and it was not to be disguised that they became, from day to day, more discontented, that they relaxed in their discipline, and often broke out into loud and open murmurings.

In the meanwhile the fair Bertha was weighed down with grief and alarm. She was deeply interested in the fate of the accused. For a long time he had held a place close to her heart, and she now saw him ready to sink beneath the malice of powerful and vindictive enemies. She had watched his career with interest, from the time when his name first became known in the army. Daily she heard of some bold exploit, some gallant deed of arms by which he had distinguished himself. Following the standard of the heroic Huniades, and fighting often at his side, their names were always heard together; and, to the fancy of the ardent maiden, their fame seemed blended, and the terms of hero, bold lance, peerless knight, which were, without covetousness, bestowed upon the White Knight, seemed equally to belong to his gallant though less renowned companion-in-arms. Her eye had sought him often in the lists, where his manly stature and bearing rendered it no task to follow him; and ere she was aware, she found her bosom palpitating with emotion, as at some crisis in the fray she saw his honor or fortune in peril; and it was not until his skill had won the field, that she breathed freely again, and could demand an account from her heart, why it was thus moved, why thus anxious for the success of an unknown stranger. Yet she did not dwell so long upon these inquiries as to be forced to answer them—forced to confess to herself that the qualities of honor and bravery which this good knight possessed, and perhaps those more accidental ones of noble mien and features had made an undue impression upon her heart. Though she saw him rarely at the banquet, or in scenes of gaiety and mirth, yet she could not banish the thought how well the absent knight would grace these gay assemblages; and missing him when away, if by chance he were present, the scene wore then a different aspect. The hours went gaily, her bosom beat buoyantly, and if chance brought her near to him, oppressed by a heavy throb, which still was not destitute of pleasure. At other times also, when she touched his hand in the dance, or bestowed upon him the reward of valor, her heart was stirred by an emotion, that perhaps would have wanted half its strength, had not these occasions been rare. Thus did she foster her love unknown to herself, and therefore unrepressed by any promptings of pride, and unchecked by prudence or by fear. Even when her heart seemed to force upon her the conviction, that she was warmly interested in the welfare of the young knight, perhaps too warmly, as she was wont to say; still his unknown origin, his poverty, did not permit her to frame to herself any definite expectation for the future, and she did not, therefore, set a watch upon her bosom, thus neglecting to guard it against the entrance of those emotions which put on every shape, assume every disguise, to find their way into the heart. She at first beheld in him, not so much the individual knight, as the type and emblem of knighthood itself, as an abstract of those chivalrous qualities, which had an undoubted claim upon her esteem and admiration. After the

battle of Istatu, however, he appeared before her in a different light. The services which he had rendered on that field, had added greatly to his fame—and given him a high place in the estimation of the army—and could not long remain without some permanent and substantial reward. In addition to this, he appeared as the rescuer of her father. Now she might—nay, she must be grateful to him; now must she express that gratitude in looks and words; now he was often near her, and the confined current of her emotions was poured forth into a sea of broad, deep-flowing love. And how warmly did he return this love! Heretofore he had worshipped her in secret, with that pure, loyal, and unpretending affection, which forms so fair a feature in chivalry. And even now, he did not confess his passion to her in words, but every look, every action, spoke as if a new language had been imparted to him, and she seemed endowed with a new sense to interpret and to answer it. And now, in the midst of their hopes, while for them the world had nothing but smiles, came trouble to disquiet them; trouble, which, when a great happiness is to be disturbed, never remains long away. Was it a matter of wonder, then, that during the imprisonment of the Walachian, with this fearful trial impending over him, Bertha's bosom was tortured by dreadful forebodings? Besides, she was not free entirely from self-reproach, from a sense of ingratitude toward the noble knight who had dedicated his sword and his life to her service. She was conscious that during the sojourn of the Turkish Pacha in the castle of her father, she had reaped no slight degree of pleasure from the presence of one who was, in truth, the cause of the danger which now threatened the Walachian. They had passed many happy hours together, hours colored by a dreamy, indistinct and seductive pleasure, and this at the very time when that young knight was exposed to peril. Every happy moment, every warm, even friendly relation toward Ali Pacha, appeared now like treason toward her lover. She felt that she had sported carelessly upon the verge of a dangerous passion, a passion with which only those of too severe a temperament can trifle with safety. With one of ordinary attractions, indeed, her heedlessness would have been devoid of danger, but she had ventured the risk with one who was every way the equal of her lover, one who, had she first known him, and had his faith been the same with hers, might equally have pre-occupied her bosom.

In addition to <sup>this</sup> his sadness, the gloom and mystery which hung over him, all combined to interest her, and the strange customs of his land and people furnished them with a delightful theme, upon which he knew how to discourse with a warmth and eloquence that carried her away with his words, and thus he stood toward her in the attitude of an instructor, a position when other attractions combine, most dangerous for the heart. It was not long before Bertha was sensible of this, but the temptation was too strong; in the retired castle of her father, such an inmate was like a visitant from some other sphere, and she could not at once resign the pleasure which his presence afforded her. Now, however, the danger in which her lover was placed, came as a touch-stone to her heart, to test the strength of her attach-

ment. She felt her fickleness, magnified it beyond the truth, and upbraided herself hourly with her inconstancy. She was not sparing, on the other hand, of complaint against those who had placed the good knight in this peril. She railed against the cardinal and the chiefs of the army, against the unrighteous custom of the ordeal, and by a transition that was not unnatural, against the church, which sanctioned such barbarities and employed such ministers of its justice. These complaints did not immediately reach the ears of Father Antonio. One morning, however, he encountered the quick-tempered maiden when her mood was not the most gentle. Her father had just recounted to her the ill success of an interview which he had had with the cardinal, in which he had endeavored to persuade that prelate to show some indulgence toward the young knight. The old monk saw the traces of tears in her eyes, but he did not observe the flush upon her cheek, her contracted anxious brow, and the quickness of her every movement as she approached him.

"How now, sad, my child!" he commenced, "how now, weeping! Nay, do not deny it, do not try to hide it beneath that frown. Thou art distressed and disquieted. I see it plainly; and can I do nought to aid thee, whether by word or deed, or in any other manner?"

"Thou, father!" rejoined the maiden, quickly, and in a tone of irritation, "thou canst do nothing—nothing, unless it be to return to thine own land, taking with thee those whom thou didst bring hither."

"Return! I? I will confess I do not understand thee," said the good father with a bewildered air. "I thought not that my presence was a burden to thee. Nor has it seemed so. Thou hast ever assured me that I was a welcome guest."

"Thou wast so, father—and art still. I spoke hastily. It is not thou of whom I complain."

"I should think not, in good sooth," replied Antonio. "Light has been thy shrift since I have been in the castle. True it is, thy faults have been few, but who can say that I might not have been more severe with thee. But thy mind is ill at ease. I believe now, thou hast omitted thy morning orisons, or neglected to tell thy beads, and so art troubled a little by the adversary."

"No, I have forgotten none of these. But I find therein no aid, no help against my sorrows."

"No help? Now, that I would not have supposed!" exclaimed the good father. "For where shouldst thou look for it if not from the precepts of our holy church?"

"Bid me look to heaven if thou wilt," answered Bertha, violently, "but not to the holy church! As well send me to quench my thirst at some stagnant and unwholesome pool. The water was pure once, and came from the skies, but it has fallen in filthy places, and is tainted with corruption."

"Satan is strong with thee, my child. I am filled with fear in thy behalf," exclaimed the old man in wonder. "Since that time when he appeared suddenly to us, and sojourned with us in the form of a knight, in black armor, and uttered his blasphemies in our ears, since that time thou hast been falling



away from the right path. I have seen it. Thou hast listened less to my counsel, and more than once hast treated my words slightly, and without deference. For this thou must fast and do penance, and if my spiritual aid will not suffice for thy wants, thou mayest have better—nay, the best—his eminence, the cardinal Juliani himself—”

“He!” interrupted the young maiden, indignantly, “would you point me to him for counsel? to him, that proud, worldly prelate, whose words are treachery, whose only thoughts ambition and revenge.”

“Peace! wretched, miserable maiden!” exclaimed the horror-stricken monk. “This is plain blasphemy—and perhaps worse. I am at loss to think of any penance which may atone for this sin. I doubt in truth if any suitable penance for such a fault is provided in this upper world.”

“I will run the hazard and speak my thoughts of him,” continued Bertha, warmly. “His sanctity is a cheat, his life itself a lie—all, save his ambition, and this shines without disguise in every action. Send me to *him* for spiritual counsel!” then drawing closer to the monk, she added, bitterly, “conjure up the fiend, good father! I would as soon ask aid from him as seek it from yonder haughty and vindictive cardinal.”

Father Antonio gazed upon her with uplifted hands; alarm was visible in every feature; his lips muttered prayers, and he signed himself quickly with the cross. Now and then he glanced timidly behind him, and around the apartment, as if he expected the visible appearance of that great enemy whom Bertha had thus wantonly invoked. But when he saw that his fears were not realized, and as he glanced again at the indignant maiden, and beheld her ardent countenance and her eye bright and wild, a smile spread itself gradually over his face. When it had illumined all his features, and his mind seemed to have grasped the thought with which it was laboring, he exclaimed, with quick emphasis, “*Laus Deo*. Praise to God. She is *lunatica*. She is mad. *Laus Deo*. Better the body than the soul—better the head than the heart.”

Bertha now burst into a flood of tears. The old man approached her, took her hand, and said, looking kindly in her face: “Be not thus disquieted, my daughter. This is a less evil than the other, and I am not without skill, as a leech.”

“Mad! sayst thou? What wonder if I were? But no! no!”

Antonio shook his head with an ominous smile. “But still thou wilt not be so perverse as to refuse the aid which my skill can afford thee.”

“Have I not said, father, that I need it not?”

“Yes, thou hast said so; but thus think all who are in thy condition. How long is it that I have sojourned in thy father’s castle?”

“’Tis now well nigh a month, if my memory serves me aright,” answered the maiden.

“True, thy memory does not err—and for what purpose are we come hither?”

“To disturb our peace, to overthrow and destroy—”

"Rightly answered again!" interrupted the monk. "To overthrow and destroy the enemies of our holy faith, to break this accursed truce—'tis well said—neither does thy judgment seem much impaired. Who is the most exalted, and the most deserving of power upon the earth?"

"His holiness the Pope, to whom all honor and reverence is due," answered Bertha, suffering a smile to play upon her features, for she now saw the aim of these inquiries.

"That thou hast well said again. Repeat now an *Ave Maria*."

Bertha complied.

"Now a *mea culpa*."

"This also the maiden rehearsed, and then seeing the perplexity of the simple-hearted Antonio, added, "Be at ease, good father. My mind is still clear and unclouded; but wouldst thou know what it is that moves me, look yonder!" and she led the wondering monk to the window of the apartment. "Yonder is the city of Buda, its walls are scarcely visible from this spot, but thou canst see that fortress which stands upon the hill in the centre of the city."

"I can discern it," said Antonio; "but what is this to us? I know not what this fortress is to us."

"Knowest thou not who is confined within its walls? Knowest thou not who is there awaiting a fearful doom, the victim of injustice and oppression?"

"But is he not a traitor? does he not deserve his fate?" asked Father Antonio.

"Deserve it!" exclaimed Bertha, high in indignation: "a traitor! Who will name him by that name, and make good his words with his sword? Was he a traitor at Sofia or at Istatu? Can there one be found his equal in honor, valor and stainless fidelity? and he must suffer this fate!"

Another smile of mystery stole over the broad features of the good father. "I have sharp eyes, maiden," he said. "Now do I see it all most clearly. Thou dost love this knight, and thy passion has hurried thee beyond thyself. And I was not so much in the wrong, even at first, for in truth, it is a kind of frenzy, this love. But I regard thy youth, and remember the follies of mine own. It is a subtle demon. It entereth in at the eyes, and findeth out those hearts that are free from care and devotion, nay, even the busy turmoil of the world is some guard against it, for like the devil in the evangelist, it seeketh out a house that is empty, swept and garnished. And when I reflect upon what I have seen in the world, I hold it wiser to leave the fiend undisturbed when he has once possession of his dwelling, for if driven out he will often return again, bringing seven others worse than himself. I have seen it, and know it. Oh, who can be safe that is not armed with treble sanctity?"

"Thou dost speak father, like one well versed in the mysteries of the heart."

"Why should I deny it? Why should it be thought boasting when I say that I understand myself in mysteries? I have reflected much, read much, and observed much; in these three gifts lies the secret. There are, firstly, the mysteries of our holy religion, these I have from above, or rather by a kind of spiritual instinct; then there are the mysteries of the heart, which

get from books, both ancient and new, and by observing well the ways of men and women in the world—and in the convent too, where, with good heed one may learn much—then there are, as I might say, mysteries accidental and miscellaneous, things which happen every day in life, and still are not plain; these come by practice. Oh, believe me, I have made good progress in mysteries.”

“Oh, if in your vast knowledge, father, you but knew the way to bring safety to yonder knight—to avert this ordeal, or to temper the boiling water to the coolness of the summer brook?”

Again the same smile broke over the face of the old monk, but the play of his features was now much more singular than before. His brows were raised and depressed alternately, with a convulsive and yet ludicrous motion, his under lip was compressed between his teeth as if he would set a guard upon his tongue, and his whole form swelled, as though he teemed with a secret, which threatened to burst from him in some extraordinary manner. At last he spoke in short sentences and single words, as follows: “Much may be done—much. Even I—even the meanest and most humble—even I myself may do somewhat.”

“What dost thou mean by this father?” exclaimed Bertha. “Dost thou mean that this ordeal may be averted—that thou canst turn the minds of our king and the papal legate, to dispense with this trial, or in some manner to change it?”

“This was not in my thoughts, my child. It was of the ordeal itself that I spoke.”

“Dost thou mean that by thy aid it may be endured with safety?” inquired the maiden, anxiously, drawing nearer to him.

“Doubtless, if he be innocent,” replied Antonio. “I have known those,” he continued, placing his mouth close to her ear, and whispering significantly—“I have known those who have passed it in safety—but they were innocent.”

“Dost thou believe, father, in good sooth, that his innocence will protect him, that it will cool the boiling liquid, or clothe his arm with iron that he will not feel its power?”

“Doubtless it will. Remember the three children in the furnace. If he be innocent in the eye of heaven and the holy church, fear not!”

“But thou dost mean more than this,” said the maiden, trembling with hope.

“Ask me no further—say no more,” interrupted the monk; “trust in me—or in heaven—it is the same,—or in the cardinal Juliani—it is equal. I will—heaven will take care of the innocent!”

“Now hast thou taken from me all hope by the bare mention of that name. Like a lamp that the blast hath extinguished, so has it gone from my bosom. Father, thou dost not know this man.”

“Not know him! That were a jest indeed! Not know his Eminence!—*then am I a mole, and fit only to grope beneath the earth; or an owl, that sits with wide eyes and sees nothing in the very best light, and looks passing*

wise withal—not know the cardinal Juliani Cæsarini! That I did not expect to hear at this day. For three and twenty years—yes, it is just so long—for three and twenty years have I been at his side,—in the city, in the field, in the convent—in journeys by land and sea—in perils by water and fire, and I must come at last here into Hungary, to find a simple maiden who tells me I do not know this man!”

“Well, and if thou hast known him thus long, hast thou always found him the same—always just and upright?”

“Always, my child; at a humble distance I make him my guide and pattern.”

“But reflect. Call to mind if at no time thou hast nourished doubts of his sanctity—if no action, perhaps forgotten now, has excited thy suspicion!”

“It may have been so,” replied the good father, “but the error was mine. I was weak, short-sighted, and could not grasp the full scope and measure of his plans. I remember, now that thou dost recall it to me, but it is long since—I remember especially the fate of one high in rank, who, for hostility to the church, fell and suffered the penalty of his guilt. The misfortunes of that man moved me much, for he was otherwise noble and blameless in his life, but for this contumacy.”

“Relate it, father. Was it like mine? he loved, and yon prelate—”

“He lived in the bands of holy wedlock,” interrupted Antonio, “and his wife was beautiful beyond the ordinary lot of woman—but let it pass, it is too sad a tale.”

“Nay, relate it, father. If it be so sad a tale, I may find therein somewhat which may console and soothe me.”

“Well, well!—the tears come into my old eyes while I recall it—a weakness, if not a crime. Well, well, it was in the time of the wars against the Duke of Milan, when Venice and Florence leagued together to dispossess him of his territories. It little pleased our good Pontiff, Martin V., that this prince should be oppressed, and that Venice should spread her wings so widely, and he resolved to send private succors to the duke. And the Conte d’Anguillara refused to raise his vassals, and march under the papal banner. It was thought, indeed, that he held intelligence with the Florentine, but this was never clearly shown, unless the misfortune and ruin which soon thereupon overtook him might seem to prove this charge. Notwithstanding the suspicions against him, he still remained at Rome, as though he feared nothing, and to judge from his life, who was more innocent than he! Well, he was a powerful lord and a dauntless, and it would have been a perilous thing to have used open force against him, most of all, without clear proof of his guilt, seeing that he was near akin to the Orsini, who bore no good will to his holiness. The cardinal, then a young man and high in favor with the church, was friendly to him, and hoped to turn his heart by kind words, and with this intent often visited him in his *palazzo*, where he lived, for the most part, retired from the world. But the counsel of Cæsarini had no influence upon his obstinacy, and he strove, as a last resort, to move the heart of his wife,

who had great control over the Conte. This woman was fair to look upon, with blue eyes, and locks bright as if the sunlight always shown upon them ; a beauty somewhat rare with us, for she was a native of the north, of Hungary or Bohemia, and it seemed, and many said so, openly, that the heart of Juliani was moved by her exceeding loveliness. But they who said these things were short-sighted, my child, and knew not his full purpose. In the course of time the lady disappeared, and D'Anguillara gave out that Cæsarini had carried her away with him ; overcome with rage, he indulged in open reproaches and threats against the church. All was now ripe for his destruction. His impiety, his rebellious threatenings were brought to the ears of his Holiness ; he was imprisoned ; and—well, after a trial—in short, condemned to death. He found means, however, to escape from his prison, went to his *palazzo* in the night, found it occupied by the officials of the pope, his children gone, no one could tell whither, and the same night drowned himself in the Tiber !”

“ And the poor lady ?” asked Bertha, sighing.

“ She is long since at rest. I saw her afterwards at a villa of the cardinal's, but alas, how changed ! Her beauty was gone, life had lost its hold upon her. Shortly afterward she entered the convent of Santa Maria, and sleeps now within its walls. God have mercy on her soul !”

It was some moments before Bertha could control the emotions which this narration had called up within her bosom ; and Antonio, also, seemed much moved. She spoke at last, however. “ And this great iniquity, this treachery, heaven has not yet avenged ?”

“ Thou dost mean as touching the Contessa. In this way did I, also, reason to myself, for I was young, and had not then learned to look beyond the surface. It was to drive an enemy of the church to despair, to open rebellion—seest thou not ? dost thou not comprehend ? Thus much did the cardinal himself tell me, and I know not what other aim he may have had,—for the good of the church, for who can fathom the depths of his soul ?”

“ And he lives, this prelate ?” exclaimed the maiden, raising her eyes to heaven. “ Borne on the wings of fortune, he has reached a height which few attain, while his victims have passed from the earth—one rests in the convent of Santa Maria, the other beneath the waves of the sea !”

“ And therein lies the evidence of their guilt, and the high and holy purposes of his eminence. For, can we believe, my child, can we believe, I say, that a Providence which rules over all things, even the least, even a sparrow, would so mingle good and evil in the world, that man should be at a loss how to discern the one from the other ? By its fruits know we the tree. That is so, I think—understood always that it be a fruit-bearing tree ; if not, how can we form any judgment, whether it be good or no ? So I have always thought and said, and have found it confirmed by experience. I will confess I was once vexed with doubts before I had grown in wisdom. I remember when *his Eminence first took possession of the palace of D'Anguillara, for his estates had fallen to the church, and the pope had bestowed a good part thereof*

upon the cardinal. A rich banquet weighed down the long tables; pitchers of gold and silver, with massive goblets, stood upon the board, carved with the arms of the Conte, with wine in abundance from his cellars, which had been stored there during the lifetime of his father, and rare foreign wines, those of Hungary and Germany, which he, himself, had brought home from his travels. I felt a strange fear as I took my seat at the board. I did not relish the feast, nothing tasted as it should, every morsel seemed hard to swallow, which at other times was seldom the case with me. To speak the truth, indeed, I looked often around in expectation of seeing the deceased owner of the mansion appear to claim his own. In my foolishness, I had taken my place as far as might be from the cardinal, for 'he is the cause of this,' I thought, 'and if evil should happen, it will show itself in his neighborhood.' Scarcely had the banquet commenced, however, when his eye fell upon me, and he beckoned me to take a seat at his right hand, which was a great honor for a simple monk. I banished all my fears, and did as he desired. During the course of the feast, he reviewed, step by step, the whole history of the Conte, explained how he had labored for the church, and strove to convince me of the purity of all his motives, as if my good opinion were of moment to one of his station. Nay, his condescension exceeded all bounds, he more than once poured out wine for me with his own hand, and encouraged me to be at ease, for I was little accustomed to such presence. Well—in short, I was convinced, and I have ever since regarded him as one under the immediate guidance of heaven. Toward the close of the banquet, more especially, every word he uttered brought conviction with it, and though even as soon as the following day, all his discourse had passed from my memory, yet I was not to be troubled with this—for had I not been once convinced? this I remembered. Thence, my daughter, have I learned not to judge too hastily, or to be presumptuous, for men of high and lofty character cannot at once be understood by those of humbler gifts."

Bertha listened in wonder to the words of Father Antonio; more than once she raised her hands in astonishment, and would have interrupted him with a reply, but the simple-minded monk was hurried away by his discourse, and did not notice her demeanor.

"And now, maiden," said Antonio, "hath thy father a palfrey, an easy, ambling nag, which may carry me to the camp and hither again, by even-tide?"

"Aye, father, yet it is but the ride of an hour or two."

"Aye, to your headlong knights and bustling men-at-arms, but I ride slowly, and ponder much by the way. I will go and array me for the journey."

The monk left the apartment, and Bertha remained musing, dreaming, weeping, and she knew not whether her tears fell for her own sorrows, or at the sad story to which she had just listened.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE PRISON.

THE castle in which the Walachian was confined, was a strong and well guarded fortress, which stood upon the summit of the steep hill that rose in the centre of the city. A narrow flight of steps, hewn roughly in the rock, wound up the edge of the ascent and led the way to the citadel. This was situated in the midst of an open court, surrounded by high and massive walls, which were flanked by lofty turrets, and defended from approach without, by a broad, deep ditch, over which a draw-bridge at the main entrance afforded the only passage. The apartment occupied by the accused had free egress into the court, thus affording him an opportunity for change of place and exercise, while the high walls precluded the possibility of escape. No comfort, indeed, was wanting that was compatible with his safe keeping. The lightness of his confinement, and the friendly and manly encouragement of the noble Huniades had enabled him, during the first days of his imprisonment, to endure his ill fortune with composure and hope. As the time approached, however, bringing nearer and nearer the destined ordeal, his firmness seemed at times to falter. The change was so sudden from life to death, from honor to inevitable disgrace. He had, as he thought, been upon the eve of a noble fortune. He was happy in his love, and was well convinced that the time was not far distant when he could offer to the mistress of his heart a rank which it need not shame her to accept. All was now changed. He was a prisoner, accused of treason, and awaiting a trial, in which, apparently, no human aid could serve him.

At times, it is true, he would hope for help from above ; he would recall to mind the wonderful tales and chronicles of the monks, in which heaven had interposed in behalf of the innocent, and preserved them, miraculously, from the dangers of water and of flame, from heated ploughshares and molten lead ; and thus again he would acquire, for the time, a hope that he, also, would not be forsaken. These feelings, however, were but of short duration. A single glance upon the age in which he lived, upon the character of him who held his fate in his hands, was sufficient to change them into despair. The thought, too, that his own rash temper had exposed him to his present danger, doubly embittered his reflections. He might have refused this ordeal, in that age nearly disused, and laid aside, and none could have blamed him. "Yet I should have been accused of impiety," he said aloud, as he sat one evening alone, busied with these thoughts. "The combat I could claim in no wise without the will of yon cardinal. The peace of the holy church forbids it. Yes, I had been branded with impiety, and he would have known how to give weight to such a charge. I must await it now, and the hour draws near. Is it for this I have toiled ? for this nurtured such hopes ? The time is scarce

gone by when infinite happiness seemed within my grasp—now, what am I? My name will no more echo in the well fought field, nor will the voice of the herald summon me again to the lists. And could I escape from these walls,” he continued, scanning the enclosure from his window, “for of this I have not yet thought—could I fly and leave all behind, friends, mistress, country—where should I find a home? where an honorable career of arms? I must fly far—to the Turk, to Asia, for would not the trumpet’s sound proclaim me a traitor and a felon throughout Europe? How sweet was its music once when it called me to the lists—how my heart did leap at the stirring signal! I shall hear it once again, and what a note will it sound!”

The young knight bowed his face in his hands, and endeavored to regain his composure. At this moment the door of his prison opened. He looked up and a tall figure stood before him in which he recognized that strange monk, the companion of his ride from the baron’s castle.

“Thou hast found my words true, my son,” said the monk, after he had gazed upon him for a short time in silence. “Thou art a prisoner, and by the agency of none other than the legate Juliani.”

“Even so, I remember thy warning,” replied the other. “But thou must know him father, thou must *know* this man. Thou couldst not from a passing glance pry thus deeply into his bosom. Save from an intercourse of years, thou couldst not attribute to him such ruthlessness.”

“Aye, I know him,” answered the monk.

“And thou also hast felt the weight of his hand. Is it not so? thou also hast suffered from his enmity!”

“Peace, peace!” exclaimed the monk, while a light flashed from his eyes, “I am not here to speak of my own wrongs, but of thine, and to take counsel for thy danger. Hast thou no powerful friends in the court or army whose aid may yet avail to avert the trial which awaits thee?”

“Some such I have,” replied the Walachian, “and though few, they are like tried steel; but they are far outnumbered in the council.”

“Whom dost thou count as such?” asked the old man.

“First and chief among them is the Waivode of Transylvania, John Huniades,” said the knight.

“A name of worth, and if there be any which can not outweigh that of the cardinal, it is his.”

“Then, there is the old baron, Moritz Von Arnheim, who owes his life in some measure to my sword.”

“A stout old knight!” said the monk, “and one who has already busied himself much in thy behalf. Whom else dost thou hold as friends?”

“Newbrun, Heinrich Von Sezfeld, have been well inclined to me, as also Baron Rosenberg: yet I cannot build much upon their friendship. I can name none others than these.”

“How stands the king affected towards thee?”

“Heretofore, most graciously—more so, much more than I have merited.”

“And the Earl of Cillia?” asked the monk, eyeing him sharply.



"He!" exclaimed the young knight, his face flushing proudly. "He is mine enemy. Mention him not, good father. By my knighthood, I would sooner perish than own life or liberty to his favor."

"I remember, he lies under thy challenge in this matter for which thou art now imprisoned."

"Aye, and would to God the issue lay only between us two!"

"Youth is a fair bright time," said the old man, while a cold and bitter smile crept upon his features. "It is a time for love and kindly affection. Thou shouldst not, at thy years, for so slight a thing, nourish anger and deadly enmity."

"It is not for this that I hold him as an enemy," replied the Walachian. "If thou wilt listen, father, I will disclose to thee that which has never passed my lips. There is one, if he be yet alive, who knows it and more, more than myself indeed of my own history. As far back as my memory clearly reaches, I have been engaged in arms. I made my first essay in chivalry under the noble Huniades when he commenced his career in the service of the Bishop of Zagrab. It was not long before I gained his favor, and when the campaign was ended, I followed him to Transylvania, where, by a wealthy marriage, he laid the foundation of his present fortunes. I was with him in the civil wars which convulsed this kingdom, when the Austrian would have forced a king upon the nation, and the influence of his name and arms placed the crown upon the head of our Ladislaus, then king of Poland. I fought with him also against the Turks, and received knighthood at his hands. Thus much of my course of life, yet this only I will add; I have striven always to keep my name free from reproach, and to do my devoir as a brave knight and soldier—my name, I said, good father; yet of this I have in truth been ignorant. I have been called only the Walachian, or sometimes the knight of Stenzen, a small fief which I hold from Huniades. Who were my parents, their rank and lineage, whether I am nobly or ignobly born, of these have I known nothing. Yet through all my fortunes I have been followed by a faithful servant, nay I may call him father, for such hath he been to me. He, as I well know, is acquainted with the secret of my life, with my birth-place, the name and station of my parents, but my prayers could never bring him to disclose them to me. He would hint at danger when I urged him, danger from powerful enemies, which might crush my hopes in the bud—the time had not yet arrived—he must wait until my own renown, and the help of strong friends, which this would gain me, should show a prospect of making good my claims—for such he spoke of, and claims here in Hungary, which should raise me to no mean rank in the land. In this way would he reply to my entreaties, and let me conjure him ever so earnestly, nay, even with anger and tears, he was not to be moved. Yet from some words which once escaped him, I have been led to connect yon Earl with the history of my life; certain is it he often warned me of him, and for months past I have felt but too clearly that he is my enemy. In this matter of the escape of the Osmanli, he has pursued me most vindictively. Thus, thou see'st, father, I have good cause to term him my foe. Nay

there is more. I can remember, but it is far, far back in my childhood, dwelling in a land like this, where the winters were rough and cold, and a form like the Earl of Cillia is woven with those remembrances—every thing must deceive me, or we have been together long ago here in Hungary.

"Where is this faithful follower?" asked the monk, earnestly.

"Alas, father, fate has shown its utmost spite against me. My old companion has disappeared, and when, as he himself said, the time drew near. Then came this charge of treason—this imprisonment, and the end—the end will soon follow." The young knight paused, his breast heaved with emotion, and he turned his face aside, to conceal the agitation which showed itself in his features. The monk had listened to his narration with singular interest, and now stood silent for a moment as if reflecting upon what he had heard, when he exclaimed suddenly, "And the name of that old servant? that thou hast not yet mentioned."

"He was called Johann, father," said the Walachian, gazing in wonder at the agitation of the old man.

"Johann!" said the monk, sadly, "Johann! then thou art not—but how looked he? Had he dark flashing eyes with heavy brows, and black curling hair? Was his form short and strong? Speak, how looked he?"

"His hair is white with years, and his eyes are dim—yet is he low in stature, though no longer strong."

"Fool that I am!" exclaimed the monk, "time has changed him; and his name—this also may have been changed. But hast thou no relic of past times, no token, from which thou canst guess of thy parentage?"

"This I have, but it is silent to me." As the young knight spoke he moved a ring which was upon his finger, turning the seal or disk from the inner side of his hand outwardly, in the manner in which those ornaments are usually worn, and then reached his hand to the monk.

The latter gazed upon it with strange emotion. His whole form trembled, and he seemed about to draw the knight to his bosom, but he refrained. He dropped the hand which he held, drew his robe about him, folded his arms, tried to compose his features, and then after a momentary pause, said with a hesitating voice, "Cast thou not remember—long, long ago,—before thou wast first in Hungary, another land and other scenes?"

"At times uncertain and indistinct remembrances will visit me like visions. I then dream myself in a gay palace, with marble pillars and tessellated pavement, and with its doors and latticed windows always open to the day. I see then a fair form with golden locks bending over me, and I call her mother!"

"Was it like this?" said the monk. He had taken the hand of the Walachian again, and touching the ring, its surface of gold and enamel work flew back, and discovered the face of a fair and very beautiful woman. He himself turned his eyes from the picture, but the young knight gazed upon it with tears.

"I cannot remember," he said, "yet it must be she."

"Yes, it is: it is thy mother!"

"It is my mother ! and how beautiful, what a heaven of innocence lies in those eyes !"

"Out, boy ! she was a wanton !" exclaimed the monk, fearfully.

The Walachian turned, his eyes flashed, he grasped the monk by the throat, shook him violently, and strove to hurl him to the earth. But there was great strength in the limbs of that old man. He resisted for some moments the utmost exertions of his opponent, but the sinews of the young knight were strong with anger, and after a short struggle he fell beneath him upon the floor. "Dog of a monk !" exclaimed the knight, setting his knee upon his breast ; "lying priest, retract thy slanderous words, or by the blessed light of heaven, I will presently tear out the foul tongue with which thou hast uttered them."

The monk glared upward upon him, loosened his hand from his neck, and said—"Thy grasp is upon the throat of thy father—thy knee upon his breast !"

The Walachian started to his feet, and then stood as if transformed to stone.

"Yes, thou art my son," said the monk, rising from the earth, and opening his arms to receive him. Thou hast been long lost to me, but God has at last given thee to me again."

"Thou ! my father !" exclaimed the knight. "How knowest thou that thou art my father ?"

"Thou needst not doubt it. A voice from heaven would not sound clearer to me, than that which now speaks within my bosom."

"Nay, but give me some proof ! whence knowest thou it ?" cried the Walachian, bending anxiously before him.

"By thy voice, thy form, by yon ring which this hand bound about thy neck. Thine age too, thy recollections, all confirm it." The next moment they were in each other's arms.

"Thou art sure that I am thy son ?" said the knight, raising his head from the bosom of the old man, and gazing earnestly at his blighted features.

"Oh, I am sure !" replied the monk, "as certainly as thou hast been so long lost to me, so surely art thou my son."

"And thou hast not always worn these garments ?"

"When of thy years I also was a knight as thou art."

"And this is the image of my mother ?" said the young knight, looking again upon the picture.

"It is like life as she once was—but speak not of her, forget her !"

"Forget her ! not speak of her ! Can I forget that I owe all to her—this life, the joy of this moment ?"

"Listen till thou shalt hear what thou hast lost by her faithlessness. And be thou calm, my son, while I relate it—yes, be thou calm, nerved to the utmost. Let revenge, if it will, and furious passion sweep across my soul, but do thou control thine anger, and aid me to subdue the storm which memory will call up within my bosom. Thou canst not feel it as I do, for thou didst not know her. But I—I was nourished by her love." The old man was

silent for a moment, and then proceeded with a firm, measured voice, as follows—

“I was once a knight, and a nobleman. I held fair possessions in Italy, and was near akin to the Orsini, one of the noblest names in Rome, but as it chanced, unfriendly to the ruling pontiff who was a Colonna, a family of old hostile to ours. When young, of less than thy years indeed, I travelled through various parts of Europe, through Bavaria, Austria, and at last came so far as Hungary, where I passed many months. Here I first met thy mother, a maiden whose beauty I had never seen equalled in my own land. Yon picture is a faithful copy of her outward form and loveliness.” The Walachian looked again at the picture, and his eyes overflowed with tears. The lips of the old monk also, though he followed him but in thought trembled violently, and he was scarcely able to utter—“Could guilt harbor where such purity shone?”

“Never! my father, never! Thou hast been abused by villains. She was innocent. I would stake my soul’s welfare upon it—she was innocent.”

“Thus thought I also when I first gazed upon her, aye, and long, long after would the sound of her voice, and the expression of her features when recalled by memory, banish for a while my doubts—nay, the certainty of her guilt. Great God! thou didst create in her a noble creature, but she was not perfect! She came of a distinguished family,” continued the old man, “and held in her mother’s right large estates upon the Danube. They are now in the possession of Ulric of Cillia, her maternal cousin. Enough—we were wedded, and I returned with my bride to Italy. I will not attempt to describe the happiness of the first few years after my marriage. Often when my voice has been raised against heaven in reproaches, has the remembrance of that time checked my complaints. The veriest wretch might well be grateful, could he but call that happiness his own, were it parcelled and spread out over his whole life, and mingled with its cares. In the wars which soon followed I took no part. Venice and Florence leagued against the Duke of Milan, and the Pope, who was not destitute of ambition, supplied him with secret succors, hoping, as many thought, to enrich himself at the expense of the Florentine. I refused to aid in the undertaking, as no open war existed between those powers and the estates of the church, and thus drew upon me the bitter anger of the Pontiff. Still I dreaded no violence; against this I thought the power of our house and that of the Orsini a sufficient protection. My fears began to be aroused, however, when Braccio da Montane, one of the most renowned condottieri of the times, and at the head of a formidable band of troops, was taken into the service of the church. But as I led a retired life, and did not busy myself with public affairs, I thought my offence might have been forgotten. In the meanwhile,”—here he paused for a moment, and pressed his hand upon his throat as if to keep down some swelling emotion. “in the meanwhile Juliani Cæsarini, now Cardinal and Papal legate, manifested great friendliness toward me. He came often to see me at my palazzo

in the city, and as the relation in which I stood toward the Pope often came in speech between us, he assured me of his aid if I should be placed in peril, for he was already high in favor with the Pontiff." The old man labored to preserve his calmness as he proceeded. "He had many interviews—this Juliani, this fiend—with my wife, and she was pleased—for she confessed it often to me—with the courtly carriage, the noble bearing of the man, and as she was so frank with it, I thought that it was no more than mere friendliness and courtesy. By this time the appearance of things became changed. Braccio's soldiers were quartered in the city, and it seemed evident that the Pontiff meditated a blow against some private enemy. It came more suddenly than it was expected. I returned one day to my dwelling," continued the monk, faltering, "and having somewhat to communicate to my wife, went straightway to her apartment. I found it empty, searched throughout the palace—for my mind, I knew not why, misgave me—went to her nearest friends to gather news of her, returned, inquired of my domestics—no one knew, no one had seen any thing of her. Her own attendant entered; I questioned her of her mistress. 'She is at the palace of the Cardinal Juliani,' was the reply.

"The words were like a thunder-stroke to me. For days past I had had strange forebodings. I expected evil; but this, this I had not looked for. I sent to the palace of Juliani; I set spies in the street to watch his motions; but for two days I heard nothing of her—on the third an old servant brought me word that she had been taken to a villa of the cardinal's in the neighborhood of the city. Upon inquiry I found that she had often held secret interviews with him, and other things which strengthened my suspicions to certainty. Where now was there to be found a hope, a rescue for me? I thought not upon my children, upon thee, my son, and thy brother. I thought only of myself—of my loss, my infinite loss! I was weary of life, and broke out into a storm of rage, called down imprecations upon the church, its priests and pontiff, and swore undying vengeance against the fiend who had wronged me. It must have been that there were spies around me. My words were brought to the pope, who, grasping at any pretext to destroy me, gave the order for my imprisonment. This was easily effected, as I took no measures for my safety. I was confined in the papal dungeons, accused of impiety and hostility to the Holy See—well, and after much torture, was condemned to lose my head upon the scaffold. The evening preceding the day fixed for my execution, was enabled to escape from prison. I returned to my home, found it occupied by the officials of the pope, and went then to the house of a sure friend to learn something of my children. Ye were in safety. I found you there, for Giacomo, a faithful—"

"Giacomo!" exclaimed the young knight. "I remember he often called himself Giacomo; but it is long since."

"It is the same, my son," said the monk. "To his care did I commit you, charging him to bring you with him into Hungary to the Earl of Cillia, (father of this present Ulric,) a good man. I have not seen him since I parted

from you. Upon this I procured me the dress of a monk, cast my own garments into the Tiber, and on the following day it was believed throughout the city that I had been drowned in escaping from prison. Since then have I been a wanderer upon the earth, wishing nothing, seeking nothing but vengeance. For a long while I remained in Rome, setting danger at defiance, and thirsting for the blood of my destroyer; but at no time did he cross my path. In despair, I left the city, wandered through Italy into France and Spain, where I took part in the wars against the Moors. Thence I returned to Rome again, where for months I lay concealed, unknown even to those who were friendly to me, and watching, lynx-eyed, for my prey; but him whom I sought, mine enemy, I could never find. At this time, the thoughts of my children returned to me, and I travelled into Hungary to see them or hear of their welfare. They were gone thence, and I could hear nothing of them, except, that upon the death of the old earl, they had disappeared with the attendant who had charge of them, and it seemed to me as if he must have feared some danger from Ulric. This blow I did not feel, however. I had become callous to suffering. My bosom was seared. Joy alone—one only joy could touch its blasted surface—the joy of vengeance. I returned to Rome once more; but fate seemed to thrust itself between me and my destined victim. The cardinal was absent on some foreign embassy for the church. Wearied out, at last, by disappointment, I entered the convent of Santa Maria, and turned my thoughts toward heavenly things. I was losing gradually my settled purpose of revenge, and perhaps might even have relinquished it, when an occurrence happened which set my brain on fire again. I was called to hear the confession of a nun of the convent—sister Francesoa, she was named. Oh, who can paint my emotions as I listened to her whispered words, while she kneeled before me in the confessional. It was *her* life they pictured to me, *her* misfortunes; but without *her* folly and guilt. From this hour my thirst for vengeance blazed again with all its old fires, and I came forth to seize it. I know I shall not miss it now."

The young knight had listened to these words with an emotion which cannot be described. When they were ended he covered his face for a moment with his hands, then raised it quickly, and looking at his father, while lightning glanced from eye to eye. "But why hast thou not dealt the blow ere this?" he cried. "How is it that thou hast ridden with him upon the road hither, hast sat at meat with him, dost daily encounter him, in and about the camp, and hast not stabbed the villain to the heart?"

"Know, my son," replied the old man, "that since my sojourn in yon convent, my heart has been more moved than heretofore by the influence of our blessed religion. While engaged, therefore, in advancing its sacred banner against the Infidel, I will not strike him. I have sworn it."

"But this vengeance is mine also," exclaimed the young knight. "I am bound by no such oath."

The old man started toward him as if he had been an enemy. "Touch him not, or may my curses blight thee. As a dear heritage would I bequeath

his revenge to thee, if it were possible that I could die and leave it unaccomplished. But that cannot be. I shall live to trample him like a worm beneath my feet, to deal his death-stroke to him, and howl my wrongs into his ear while the life-blood is ebbing from his veins. That moment also will be my last. I shall follow him from this earth to the dread tribunal of Heaven, there to plead in accusation of him. I have thought," he continued, laughing fearfully, "that as this revenge is a forbidden passion, and must meet its punishment, if it were not fitting I should become a fiend there also, to torment him through eternity. I could find submission in my heart to such a sentence."

The knight trembled to see the frightful passion which shook the frame of his father, and he endeavored to turn his mind from such thoughts. "Thy name, father, and the name of thy house?"

"I was the Conte d' Anguillara, and called Francesco. Thou, my son, wast my eldest born, and called from me, Francesco. Thy brother's name was Guido."

"And my mother?"

"Adhelaide von Altenkreuz."

"Alas, my father, thou hast suffered much!" said the young knight, drawing near to the old man, and placing his arms about him, while he gazed sorrowfully upon his pale and grief-worn features.

"Well, yes, I have suffered; but that is now nearly at an end," said the monk. "Let it pass. Thou, at least, art restored to me; but in what peril! Let this now occupy thee, and leave the rest for the day which is set apart for it."

"Oh, think not of my fate," said the young knight. "I am raised above it. My sorrows are lost in thine. Let the judgment take its course. I fear it not now, and who can say that Heaven may not do some wonder to protect the innocent!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the old man, fearfully, and baring his right arm, he showed it blackened and seared with scars and shrunk to helplessness. "Dost thou nourish that thought? I myself have endured this ordeal. Look there! See how it prospered with me."

"Almighty heaven!" exclaimed the knight; but this was all he could utter.

"It is but jugglery and craft. They have their arts, these priests, to save or to convict whom they will. To stand well with the church might avail thee; but with heaven—it were an idle hope!"

"Thou also hast endured this ordeal?"

"Aye, in God's temple, before his altar, and brought upon me by the same demon who has thee now in his snares; and by a near chance I had foiled his malice. That friend—he was an Orsini, and well versed in Romish craft—was in possession of I know not what, some charm or mixture, of such power, as he said, that protected thereby, one might endure that ordeal without danger. He gave it into the hands of the faithful Giacomo, and charged him

to find admission to my prison and place it in my hands. Whether they suspected his intent, I know not, but he was not permitted to approach me, and I suffered. This I learned from him on that night when I escaped from my dungeon. Thou see'st now into what a snare thou art fallen."

The young knight seemed overcome with wonder, and borne down by the hopelessness of his condition. I will not abide it then. I will draw my sword and die in arms."

"Right exclaimed the old count, in a voice of thunder, "and thou shalt see if this old arm will not strike some good blows for thee. One blow it shall strike; for should it come to this, I will stab him if he stood at the altar. As yet, however, we know not but this tumult among thy followers may change the king's purpose; and I will be busy fanning the flame. Therefore, farewell, my son, farewell!"

"Yet hold, father!" exclaimed the young knight, hesitating. "There is another—a being—her image is woven with all my dreams."

"Thou dost love, my son!" said the old man, sadly. It were pity that thou shouldst quit life without knowing how sweet is the dream."

"Oh, I know, I have felt it!" replied the knight. "Yes, I love, father, and as I hope, am loved in return. The daughter of the old Baron Von Arnheim has long been the mistress of this heart. As yet, I have not spoken to her of my passion; for I knew not that in rank or fortune I was her equal. But now, my tongue will be unloosed. Let but to-morrow pass, and the next day sees me led to a fearful fate. Therefore I would behold her once more—to disclose my love in words—to tell her she has not set her heart upon an unworthy one—to take a sad, a last farewell. Wilt thou not see her, and bear my message?"

"I will see her," said the old man, while his eyes became moist.

"And take this chain with thee as a token that thou dost come from me. Her hand placed it about my neck. I have worn it there when the battle has been the wildest. It was better to me than my steel corslet. Oh, there is no armor like such a gift of love. It strengthens the soul, makes it imperious and lordly in the fight, and it will then shun no danger. But bid her bring it with her, I would wear it on that day." The old man did not reply. He received the token at the hands of his son, gazed upon him as though he would imprint his image forever in his memory, took him then in his arms, and held him long to his heart. With this he uttered a farewell, and left him to his solitude.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM.

It was not yet evening, on the following day, when Huniades entered the apartment of his prisoner. He found him pacing the floor with a firm step.



his arms folded upon his breast, and with the air of a man whose courage is braced to the highest pitch—not of one indeed who meditates a bold and dangerous deed; but who is resolute to suffer and endure. There was not wanting a trace of loftiness in his features; and it seemed to Huniades, as he advanced, as though his eye shone with more than usual brilliancy, and as if his demeanor toward him was more free and equal than it was wont to be.

"Thou bearest thyself well," he said, as he approached, and took the hand which the Walachian reached to him. "By heaven, I remember not, since thou hast dwelt within these walls, to have seen thee wear such a face upon it—and still the ordeal draws near."

"It draws near," said the young knight, quietly, as if his thoughts were absent.

"I have found it ever so with the brave man," continued the former. "His courage rises with his danger, and he finds strength within himself to endure that which at a distance seemed to possess the power to crush him to the earth. But I think all hope is not yet lost."

"Hope?" replied the knight, calmly. "That is a deceitful word. I am buried up by other thoughts, and do not need it."

"And still it is as I have said. I do not yet give up the game as lost. I deem it not impossible but thou mayst escape this trial."

"Why thinkest thou thus, my lord? where dost thou find the least grounds upon which to build a chance for my safety?"

"Thou hast some friends still left among us, and these have not been idle in thy behalf. I, myself, have spared no labor to turn the mind of the king to thy favor."

"And how seems his majesty inclined toward me?" asked the young knight.

"Of himself, Ladislaus is reasonable enough, but he lends an ear to yon proud prelate, who rules him, turns him this or that way as he wills, and Ulric of Cillia prompts and aids him, moved, as I think, by the malice of hell."

"The usurping villain! Well, and what hope seest thou in this? Thyself, the old baron, Seefeld perhaps, and Neubrun on the one side, and the king, the legate Juliani, with yon earl, and I know not who beside, upon the other. Scarcely does the balance turn in my favor."

"Nay, there are others," answered Huniades, "of some note, too, who esteem it foul shame that a good knight, as thou hast ever proved thyself to be, should come to harm undeservedly, and this by a custom long since disused amongst us. But shake not thy head, nor look as though thou wert already standing before the cauldron—the best is not yet told."

"Give it me, then, my lord," was the reply; "let me know this *best*, as thou dost term it, and then turn my thoughts to other things—for with hope, as I told thee, I have now no further dealings."

"Out upon thee, boy, that thou shouldst say so!" exclaimed the Waivode, in a tone of mingled reproof and compassion. "But listen. Thou hast heard how of late there have been murmurings among thy Walachians, how

they have clamored against the injustice done to their leader. Well, the discontent has reached now to open mutiny, and some of the oldest of them swear by St. Constantine, that they will not draw sword in this war, if the matter be pushed to extremity. The old baron, as I well know, first began the game, but within these three days they bring me the devil into the play. Yes, the incarnate fiend, in the shape of a pale-faced monk, walks the camp by night, and stirs up mischief among the men."

"I believe in truth," said the knight, interrupting him, "that the fiend lurks in our camp. But, by heaven, those must look higher than the garb of a poor monk—closely seen, he will be found under the purple."

"Thou mayst be right, in good sooth," said Huniades, smiling, "though it smacks somewhat of license to say so. But this devil, or monk, or whatever he be, is a staunch friend to thee. He has blown the flame until it has spread through half the army. As I entered but now, I received a message from the king that thy men are in open tumult, and some of the rest scarcely in better mood, and I must ride over to the camp to take order with the knaves."

"And thou wilt do it, my lord?" asked the young knight.

"Forthwith," was the reply. "I will teach the varlets to busy their heads with what belongs above them."

"And whither, then, vanishes the hopes which but now—"

"By heaven!" interrupted the Waivode, "I have my part to play! Am I not general and chief? I can favor no mutiny nor tumult."

"Nor would I ask it," replied the young knight, taking him by the hand. "Go on, my lord! follow out the path which hath led thee so high. Let not a thought of my fate turn thee aside from the career of honor. Yet this I ask—when all is over, when I am no longer upon the earth—remember me. To know that I shall live in the memory of such a knight will cheer me in my last hour."

"Ere I forget thee, I must first forget the fields in which we have fought side by side together," said Huniades, deeply moved, "and that would be to forget one half my life. But a truce with such thoughts. I will rein in these turbulent knaves, but it shall be done discreetly. I will still leave them so much scope as shall keep our good king in fear. Farewell, then! for I have already wasted too much time in words, having this business in hand. And hark thee! be not downcast, nor suffer this sad mood to master thee. Who can tell how thy fortune will order it!"

"Yet one thing ere thou goest, my lord," said the other, detaining him. "I look hourly for one who is dear to me—a maiden. Wilt thou not give command that she pass unquestioned, and be exposed to no danger or rudeness from the guards?"

"That, by my life, thou needst not fear. But this is some honest maiden? for thou wouldst hardly, at such a time, busy thy thoughts with a—"

"Pure and spotless is she as the blue depths of heaven, and my love is worthy of her!" exclaimed the young knight, with ardor.

"She shall pass without hindrance," said Huniades, sadly. "Farewell,

and believe not but I shall remember whose fate I hold in some measure in my hands." With these words the good knight withdrew. The Walachian stepped to the window to watch him as he departed, and he saw that when he passed the sentinels he spoke earnestly to them, and then the gate hid him from his view. He did not yet leave his position, however, but remained until the twilight was lost in night, waiting for her whom he loved, or for his father, with some message from her. He was about to turn from the window, when he heard the outer gate unfastened, and saw, indistinctly, three figures cross the court. In one of these he recognized his father, the second was a female, and the third seemed an attendant. As the two former entered, the young knight rushed forward to receive Bertha in his arms, for she trembled, and seemed scarcely able to support herself. The next moment he would have welcomed his father, but the features of the old man preserved their cold, dark expression, and he prevented him with these words: "I have done thy bidding, Sir Knight, and it is meet that I should now depart."

"Thanks, holy father," said the knight; "but go not thus, it may be the last time."

"We shall meet again, doubt it not," said the old man.

"But at least give me thy blessing ere thou goest."

"Thou hast it always, my son—farewell!"

The young knight for a moment gazed sadly after him as he departed, and then turned to her whom he held upon his arm. "Gentle, kind Bertha!" he exclaimed, "this is like thee, this is worthy of thee. Not in the most fortunate hours of my life would thy presence fill me with more joy."

"In such hours, unhappy knight," said the maiden, "I had not sought thy presence in this wise. But I cannot forget what I owe thee, and the doom which threatens thee—save for this, I had not ventured upon a step, which might be censured as unseemly."

"I had hope, Bertha, of more than this, though this is more than I could merit from thee. I had hope that a feeling warmer than gratitude might have some share in moving thee to this kindness. The reverence, dear lady, the love that I have borne toward thee should still remain unspoken, were not the time that is left to us so short. Yet thou hast known it all—words could not speak my love more plainly than my every action, every look has done. Hast thou not known it?"

"It was my thought, Sir Knight," said Bertha, struggling with her tears.

"And for thyself—at such an hour I may ask it—has not that love found an answer in thy bosom? Nay, thou mayst own it without a blush, for never was there passion purer and more noble than mine own."

"Standing, as thou now dost, Sir Knight, upon the extreme verge of peril. I will own to thee that which but for this danger had still remained buried in my bosom. I have seen thy noble and loyal love, I have watched thy career in arms, until—yes, until my hopes and my happiness have become one with thy name and honor."

"Now hast thou taken from death its power!" exclaimed the young knight,

his face lighted up with joy. "Oh, what magic is there in these words! Thou hast made me happy, infinitely happy, in spite of the future which threatens me. I give thee thanks, dear Bertha," he continued, pressing his lips upon her forehead, "thanks, nurtured long in the inmost depths of my heart and treasured up for this moment. Whatever fate may await me, it will lose its terrors, so that shame and dishonor darken not upon my last hour. I have reaped already the best fruits of life—an honorable name, the love of the purest and fairest maiden beneath the sun. So I lose them not by any fault of mine, but by the malice of enemies, I will die content. And do thou, Bertha, dearest Bertha, do thou give me a place in thy memory."

"Thou shalt dwell there until the last," said the maiden, scarce able to speak for emotion.

"Nay, I mean not that thou shouldst close thy bosom forever against love. It were unjust to ask it. Another, perhaps a nobler suitor will seek thy hand; thou art young, life will offer all its charms to thee, and thou wouldst err shouldst thou slight them. But hold my memory dear to thee. Think of me as one who worshipped thee with devoted loyalty, as one not unworthy of thee; one who, had he lived, and lived in peaceful times, would have secured thy happiness. By heaven, could it have been! I would have borne thee on this bosom through the world, these hands should encircle thee from danger, and thy feet should glide through life as upon a carpet. But it was not meant to be so! Yet, remember me, but forget not thyself, thy youth; and when the love thou now bearest me has died away to calm and friendly regret, then let the fire kindle again for some happier one, and thus thou wilt not live without that which alone makes life worth the enjoying."

"Never, Sir Knight!" exclaimed the lady, sadly. "My bosom will remain cold as marble when the affection which now warms it shall be extinguished."

A happy, yet incredulous, smile passed over the features of the Walachian as he pressed his lips to her cheek. "Say not so," he replied; "speak not too rashly. Above all, do not, as many a maiden has done when disappointment has fallen upon her, do not in thy first grief immure thyself in a convent, where the kindest feelings of thy nature will become chilled, like the stone walls which enclose thee, or if they burn, burn only to consume the heart. Let a year pass by, if thou wilt thus long mourn for me; then go thou forth into the world, and look around to see if of its many pleasures thou canst not glean enough to make life happy to thee. Let time and fortune take care for the rest. And now, Bertha, I have a secret, a little secret to impart to thee, that thou mayst not hold me overweening and presumptuous in thus speaking. I am not what I seem—a poor, landless knight, with no name but that which my good sword has won for me. I have long believed this, or I had not raised my hopes so high—and now, I know it with certainty. I am nobly born, of high rank, higher than thine own indeed, as the world measures rank, and of right should hold estates here in Hungary—estates which would entitle me to ask for thy hand."

"If this be so, why dost thou not declare thyself?" said the maiden. "It may be the king would set more value upon the safety of a nobleman than upon that of an unknown soldier."

"The time has not yet come when I could do it. The chief of my enemies is he who holds my possessions in his hands. Should I lay claim to these, he would move heaven and earth to hasten my fate. There are other reasons also, of more weight than this, but of these I cannot now speak!"

"Thou dost thyself think that there is no hope then?" inquired Bertha, waiting for his reply with intense interest. He answered not in words. But the calm, yet hopeless expression of his features, as he shook his head sadly, and drew her closer to him, spoke to her with sufficient clearness. "Canst thou not fly from hence?" she exclaimed. "The doors are open; exchange thy dress with yon faithful servant and fly—fly far, while he will remain here in thy stead."

The young knight gazed upon her ardent, glowing face, as she uttered these words hurriedly and with the eagerness of new hope, and answered: "True, the doors are open, but by whose kindness is it that they are so? whose honor is surety for mine? Thou see'st, Bertha, I am bound to this dungeon more strongly than any iron could bind me—were I gyved and manacled, were bolt and bar drawn upon me, I should be less a prisoner than now, while holding this slight freedom from the favor of my trusting sponsor."

"Yet he, himself, would rejoice at thine escape. Give honor all its due, but is not life, thy happiness and mine, worth more?"

"Grant it were so, Bertha, yet whither could I fly where the shame of a felon would not cleave to me? My name would ring throughout Europe as a disgraced knight and an outlaw."

"The Emperor of the Greeks would give thee an honorable place in his army. Thou hast served him, and he knows thy worth. Venice, or the Despot of Servia would welcome thee."

"Yes, under the Grecian Emperor, I might obtain wealth and honors; but I value them lightly as the chaff, when the flail of the peasant has beaten the grain from the sheaf. A good name alone gives them worth; and what a name shall I leave behind me? Men will speak of me as a traitor, as one condemned, and I shall not be near to give them the lie—to rescue with my arm the fame which I hold so dear. Thee, too, Bertha, must I leave, and to die is a less evil. I reckon not of death; I have met him often in the field, and fear him not, let him appear in what form he may."

"But this fearful ordeal?"

"I will not abide it. I will suffer no traitor's doom. I will grasp my sword, and appear for the combat. If Christian knights array themselves against me, they shall at least give me no dishonorable death. And if a desperate defence cannot rescue this body from the grave, it shall at least cover my name from reproach. Friends and foes shall confess, that as my *life was not unworthy of praise*, so my death did not tarnish whatever I have

come of noble or knightlike. And now, Bertha, give me that chain I sent thee—I would wear it in that hour of extremity !”

As Bertha reached the chain to him, he took her once more in his arms to bid her a last farewell. They spoke this word often and often to each other, mingled with terms of endearment and regret ; tears of bitter grief coursed over their cheeks ; doubt, dreamy hopes, and strong despair thronged alternately across their souls ; the maiden was all terror and trembling, and the firm manhood of the knight was borne down by the severity of the trial. When they looked up, the figure of an armed warrior stood near them. So deep, so engrossing had been their emotions, that they had not heard the opening of the heavy door of the apartment, nor the tramp of his mailed feet as he approached them. It was Michal Ali, the Bey of Roumelia.

He raised the vizor of his helmet, disclosing a face pale and wan, and then without a word, sank upon a seat like one borne down with fatigue. He had crossed the wide extent of country between Buda and Ederneh with the speed of the wind, troubled by many a fear lest some mishap, some unforeseen occurrence should interrupt his journey, and he might arrive too late for the accomplishment of his purpose. But this was not all. As he approached the city, and long before, on the road thither, the thought was uppermost in his mind, that he might once more look upon her whose beauty had so enchanted him ; her for whom, indeed, he felt and believed that he had cast himself away. It was not singular, then, that a feeling of disappointment, of morose anger, should stir within his bosom, to find her again thus, in the arms of another. So great, however, was the wonder of Bertha and the Walachian, that he had time to control himself, and said only, yet in a bitter tone—“ Were it not, Sir Knight, that I came on an errand of much moment, I had not thrust myself unasked upon so soft a meeting.”

“ By my knighthood thou art welcome, Moslem !” exclaimed the Walachian, advancing towards him ; “ welcome as a cup of water after the heat and dust of the melee. But I heard thou hadst departed, and hoped that by this time thou wast in safety in thine own land.”

“ I have been hither, and am now returned again,” was the reply.

“ Thither and returned ! Heaven’s grace, but this sounds like a jest ! Yet I know the speed at which your warriors ride when the time presses them. Thou art come, doubtless, on some weighty message from thy sultan ?”

“ The sultan will in person bring his message,” said Ali Pacha. “ No, I am come with a far different aim. I owe thee thanks, noble Christian, for liberty and perhaps for life, when in the hands of those dogs, thy countrymen. Thinkst thou I have forgotten it ? I have come to return them.”

“ Thanks !” echoed the knight, in wonder ; “ ventured hither to return me thanks ! Art thou so foolhardy as to come thus into the very midst of thy deadliest enemies, to bring me empty thanks ? I knew I had them.”

“ I said not empty thanks,” replied the Moslem, “ but a return equal and just, Sir Knight, for all the service thou hast rendered me.”

“ Ha ! now dost thou believe that thy life will hold good for mine, and dost

nourish the wild thought of surrendering thyself again into the hands of the Christians. Thou hast my thanks, Ali Pacha, but it is in vain. Thou canst not turn aside my fate, and the fruit of thy ill-advised nobleness would be thine own destruction."

"Yet ask yon maiden," said the Moslem, looking sadly and reproachfully at Bertha, "if it were not better to put this to the hazard—better to place my life in the hands of my foes, to undergo their worst fury, if there be a chance for thy safety, small as the smallest atom that flies across the face of the desert?"

Bertha, who had scarcely spoken during this interview, except to welcome the Moslem, looked alternately and trembling from one to the other, and then hid her face in her hands. "Ask me not," she said, while the tears made their way between her fingers. "Thank Heaven, I am not placed a judge between your lives. Ye are brave men, Christian and Moslem; ye are just and noble, and must deal with yourselves as ye list."

"Weep not, noble lady," said Ali, rising and advancing towards her. "Neither for this am I come. I am here to bring him safety. Yes," he continued, turning to the knight, "I bring with me a wondrous gift, a safeguard and sure protection against this ordeal to which thou art condemned."

"Thou, Moslem! a safeguard!" exclaimed the young knight, incredulously.

"Within this vessel," continued Ali Pacha, taking the casket from his girdle, and holding it up to view, while the two whom he addressed watched his motions with intense interest, "within this vessel is contained a rare and potent liquid. Its virtues are most wondrous, for it can temper the very flame, can take from boiling water, nay, from the red-hot globe of iron, or from molten lead, all their terrors."

"What miracle is here?" exclaimed the Walachian, "or what fable? or is there glamor and sorcery in it?"

"It is the gift neither of fiend nor genii," answered the Moslem; "neither are its virtues fabulous. It was bestowed upon me by a sage of the sultan's court, a wise man, and learned beyond the ordinary lot of mortals. He is one who can trace the path of the stars, who knows the qualities of all plants and stones, and as many hold, can open the book of the future and read therein, whether this or that page, as best pleases him. If this be so, of myself I know not; but thus much is certain, he is versed in all the secrets of alchemy, and can mingle many rare compounds, the virtues of which pass belief."

"And after what manner is this wonder-working liquid to be used?" asked the knight.

"Thrice before the ordeal, Sir Knight, bathe thou thine arm with it to the elbow, and thou needst not fear. Such were the words of yon sage."

"But art thou sure that it is of such power?" inquired Bertha, anxiously, fixing her eyes piercingly upon the Bey.

"*I would stake my life thereupon,*" he answered. "Think ye not that

others hold these secrets ? that your monks and churchmen, they who control these trials of God's justice as they name them, cannot direct them at their pleasure, and save or destroy whom they will ?”

As the Moslem said this, the words of father Antonio flashed like lightning upon the mind of the maiden. Raising her hands upward, she exclaimed, “Thanks to Heaven and our sweet Lady of mercy,” and then sank at Ali's feet, saying, “Oh, I believe it !”

“Thou dost believe it ?” said the Moslem ; “shall not, then, the sages of our land, who hold all knowledge in their grasp, shall not they also arrive at like wonders ?”

“My brain reels !” exclaimed the knight. “What a snare has been cast around me—and by whom ? Almighty God ! were thy thunders silent when yon foul scene was acted ? in thy temple, at thy very altar ! Thou also, my father, shouldst have had such a friend ! And I remember—he spoke of such a one, but some mischance crossed him and his aid was not timely.”

“And now what do we not owe this noble Moslem ?” said Bertha, drawing the hand of Ali to her bosom, and then to her lips ; “what gratitude, what thanks ?”

“Lady, thou dost owe me nothing,” said the Osmanli, passing his arm lightly round her form, and gently supporting her. “All that I have done is repaid. I have faced many dangers in bringing hither this rescue, and may encounter others on my return, but all are forgotten in the pleasure of this hour.” The young knight looked on in surprise, his color changed somewhat, but he did not at once speak. “Yes,” continued the other, looking down upon her with increased tenderness, while she was weeping and lost to all around ; “I have passed many happy moments in thy presence, and life had been too poor a price to pay for them. I have not paused at risking name and honor for thee ; and if lost, by Allah, I shall think them well bestowed.”

“Hold, Sir Moslem !” exclaimed the knight, advancing and removing Bertha from his embrace : “take back thy casket. It may be worth my life, but it shall purchase for thee no such license—or I will use thy gift and do battle with thee after for thy boldness.”

“Ali's eye flashed for a moment, as he turned loftily and replied. “Wilt thou, as is the custom of the land, do battle with me for the love of this maiden ? not with blunted spear, and after the fashion of the tourney, but at the head of thy host, jerrid against lance, and cimeter against two-handed sword ? where one of us shall dye the earth with his life's blood ?”

“Aye, by St. Peter !” exclaimed the knight, “and with a right good will, so the maiden list, and will abide the issue.”

“Thou wouldst meet me, then ?” said the Moslem, proudly, “and thou wouldst think to cope with me ? Would to Allah my happiness lay upon the event of such an hour ! But she loves thee, and we of our faith woo not our maidens after this wise. Yes, I did worship her,” he continued ; “her beauty threw a net around my heart which took captive every sense Its.



influence came down upon me like the breath of heaven, like the pure odor of Allah's paradise, and steeped my being with forgetfulness. But it hath passed, passed as a vision, as the mist upon the stream, when the sun hath risen, and it floats away into air. She loves thee, and I am but as the dust beneath her feet. Take her, then, for Allah hath made her thine, and were she in my hands, a captive in our tents, I would say this as I now say it here in Buda. And now, farewell. I must turn my face toward my own land, for I have no longer any errand in Hungary."

"But thou wilt not depart to-night, wearied as thou art?" said the knight.

"No, not to-night, for I need rest both for myself and steed. I shall find it upon the plain, and be in readiness betimes on the morrow."

"The castle of my father will afford thee a welcome shelter," said Bertha, timidly, casting a glance at the Walachian as she spoke.

"The maiden speaks wisely," said the latter. "Thou art in no plight to place foot in stirrup. Return with her to the castle, and on the morrow thou wilt set forward refreshed and strengthened."

"Be it so, then," replied the Pacha. "I will again become thy father's debtor for a hospitable shelter."

As they were about to depart, Bertha's fears seemed to return again, and she said to the Moslem: "Thou must assure me once more of the virtue of yonder liquid. Is it undoubted? An error would be most fatal. I have firm faith in thine honor, but was he who gave it to thee a sure friend; may he not have mocked thee with this charm?"

"I will speak truly as though Azrael stood beside my couch. The sage who placed that casket in my hands, has from my youth up been as a father to me. Since I was first consigned to his care, a captive of the sultan's, until now, he has bestowed all love upon me. He knew the dangers I must encounter on my way hither, and urged me even with tears to turn from my purpose. Think ye then that he would mock me, that he would send me thus far upon an idle errand? He pledged his words with his life, and I also, will set my own upon the hazard. I will remain in the castle of thy father, lady, if I am a welcome guest. I will await the issue of this ordeal, and should harm come of it, should he whom thou lovest lose life or limb by the trial, I swear by Allah I will make atonement with my blood. I will ride into the midst of mine enemies and those of this good knight, and our fate shall be the same."

"It needs it not," exclaimed the Walachian. "I have no shadow of fear, and will go to this ordeal gaily, trusting in the skill of thy friend the sage, and the protection of our blessed Lady of mercy. And do thou, Bertha, be at ease, for I swear by mine honor, I put the same trust in the faith of this Infidel as in that of any knight of our host. Yet remain, if thou wilt, Ali Pacha, so it bring no danger to thee. Should it go wrong," he exclaimed to himself while he smiled, nay, almost laughed aloud, "and should this Moslem hold his word, yon cardinal might see a wild game played out on that day. *Myself, the Infidel* and he—ha, ha! lance, cimeter and mace, a goodly league

and fighting as one man, like fiends against our enemies. Ha, ha ! and who can say how strange a scene may be enacted ere this tangled web be unloosed ?” In parting with his mistress the young knight mingled much less warmth and tenderness than he might otherwise have done, for he had regard to his benefactor, but Michal Ali did not observe his forbearance. As though he cared not to witness their adieu, he had turned, passed without the apartment, and remained waiting for her in the court. In a moment he was joined by herself and her attendant, and they made their way in silence through the gate, and down the winding descent that led from the fortress to the city below.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### SCRUPLES.

In the meanwhile they in whose hands the fate of the accused seemed placed, were not free from uneasiness and perplexity. The harmony, which for the most part had prevailed in the host, was now disturbed. It is true that in an army made up of materials so discordant as those which composed that of the crusade, perfect unanimity was not to be expected ; yet thus far all jealousy and ill-will had been confined to the chiefs alone, who knew how to throw a veil over their enmity, to conceal it under an appearance of courtesy, or entirely to drown it when occasion and policy demanded it of them, and if their followers participated in their feelings, it was only to such a degree as might be looked for from national or provincial rivalry. But the severity with which the Walachian had been treated, the dangerous and unaccustomed ordeal to which he had been condemned by those who should have had regard to his worth and past services, had excited a serious commotion among the common soldiers, and one which thus far it had not been easy to suppress. Hitherto this discontent had for the most part been limited to the immediate followers of the young knight, but within these few days it had spread to other portions of the army. The men were no longer as formerly cheerful and active, they did not mingle together in athletic sports and martial games, nay, even when called upon to perform the various duties of discipline, they complied sullenly and without alacrity, and at those times when no exercises of this kind occupied them, they were seen together in groups talking earnestly, or they withdrew morosely into their respective tents. So far had the evil spread indeed, that insubordination and actual sedition had broken out among the wild Walachian riders, which had required no slight exertion on the part of Huniades to suppress. Neither was the evil now removed, but only smothered, and lay ready to break forth again as opportunity offered, or the unsettled mood of the soldiers prompted.

It was to take counsel upon these disturbances, that on the day following the mutiny, and subsequent also to the evening on which the scene occurred that has been described in the preceding chapter, Ladislaus summoned to his tent the Legate and the principal chiefs of the army. It was about noon when they assembled. The young king received them seated upon an ample chair, which covered as it was with rich damask, bore some similarity to a throne of state. His position, however, seemed accidental rather than purposed, for during the progress of the following deliberations, he often arose from it, stepped back and forth, and mingled with the rest of the lords, more than one of whom in the course of the colloquy, found himself leaning or sitting upon some piece of furniture, with which the tent was ornamented, although perhaps not accurately adapted to such use. The whole scene indeed was marked by little ceremony. This had ill suited with the place and the exigency of the occasion, and as little with the habits of those convened. It was in short a military council, and bore no resemblance to a high and grave deliberative assembly.

"Now that thou art here, my lord Cardinal," said the king as that prelate entered, "we will at once unfold the cause for which we have summoned our worthy nobles. It is touching this same Walachian knight, who has given us so much to do, and these movements in the army."

"In this matter, may it please your majesty, my council will be of little aid," replied the legate. "These noble lords and good knights here around me, are better skilled than I in quelling insubordination, and in maintaining order in the camp,—above all, as they have to do in part with their own followers."

"Rightly said, noble cardinal," answered Ladislaus, "and were this a mere matter of military discipline, of hanging a score of knaves more or less, we would spare thy thoughts all trouble in the business. But this is no such slight thing. The evil spreads hourly, and calls for some measure which may prove decisive. If we cannot check the stream, it were wise, methinks, to remove each impediment to its course, lest it become a turbulent and angry torrent."

"It must be dammed up and held within due bounds if we would constrain it to any useful purpose," rejoined the legate. "But what remedy does your majesty advise for these discontents?"

"Nay, I know not," answered the king, in some perplexity. "He must be a good knight, since he is so well beloved by those under his command, and I myself have seen it in him, and except for this unhappy matter with the prisoners, had ere now bestowed upon him some suitable reward. I would we might let this ordeal pass! How say ye, my lords? We shall thus stand at quits with him, setting his former services against this late misdeed."

"I see not, may it please your majesty, how this may be done," replied the cardinal. "It were manifest injustice toward the accused. He attests *his innocence*, and calls God to witness for him in this ordeal. When he is

once proved so, in heaven's name, let him reap the reward of his past good deeds."

"Aye, this sounds well, holy father, but prudence, prudence ! By heaven, half the host is in mutiny."

"It would bring little honor to our authority," said the Earl of Cillia, "if our councils must yield to the threats of the common soldiers. Let the men storm and bluster !"

"And for us," said Juliani, taking up the word, "let us move on undisturbed in that path which duty points out to us."

"If one could be but sure of this path of which you speak," rejoined the king. "But by my faith, my lord cardinal, it requires at times shrewd eyes to spy it out. How say ye if it should peril this goodly enterprise we have on foot. It may easily delay it, and every hour is precious, as the minutes to a condemned criminal."

"There are few I think, who have this cause more closely at heart than I myself," replied Juliani, "yet it grieves me to hear your majesty speak after this sort. Must we retract, alter, yield in our resolves, because some hundreds of wild Walachians conceive they understand council better than their chiefs, and forsooth will have it so. As well at once to lay down sceptre and truncheon, for what are these toys when the authority that gives them worth is wanting."

Ladislaus did not reply, but turning to the old baron who stood near him, exclaimed—"What sayst thou, Von Arnheim, to this counsel of the holy father ? Shall we then put off our king's crown and resign our sceptre, because some stubborn knaves turn us now and then from our course ?"

"That were hardly the part of wisdom, may it please your majesty that I say so," replied Von Arnheim. "Hadst thou always followed such advice, the crown of Hungary had been hardly joined to that of thy Poland. Your majesty may call to mind the Diet in the plains of Raab, where it was determined concerning the levies in the war with Austria ?"

"By heaven, thou dost recall it to me in an evil hour !" exclaimed the young king, his brow reddening and his whole face bearing evident marks of anger. "I remember how the knaves pressed me, and I must yield to their clamor. I bear them ill-will for it since that time, aye, and all of their kind and degree."

"And still all the higher chiefs praised thy policy," rejoined the baron, "all at least who were friendly to your majesty, although many liked it as little as I myself."

"Talk not, worthy baron, of policy with such scum," exclaimed the earl. "Set a guard over the varlets. Distribute them in different quarters of the camp—I myself will take it upon me to keep one half of them under rein."

"And we of Italy will take care for the remainder," added the cardinal.

"And thus bring ye yourselves at swords' points with our trusty servant, the Waivode of Transylvania. This were a worse evil than the other. And

thou, my lord cardinal, shouldst know that these Walachians, Transylvanians and Bulgarians, and whatsoever else they are called, are of a different mould from thy trained men at arms. They, God a mercy, ride at no man's bidding, be he pope or emperor, unless he is their lawful leader and comrade in arms, for such also must he be. They will endure no foreign rule. This must be left to Huniades; he, if any one, can control them."

"Why has he not done so ere this?" asked the cardinal.

"Oh, he has a thought upon the safety of this same knight, his follower, I doubt not," replied the king. "But what a noise and stir is this about a single man. If we release him, if we shut our eyes and pass by this fault which he is accused of, what harm can come of it?—and if he suffers for it, what do we gain? We know not if he took part in the escape of these prisoners."

"Were this known indeed," said Juliani, "then were the matter plain; then should he meet with the punishment due to his treason. But for this is it that we appeal him to the ordeal, that God may judge and defend the right."

"Why not try him by his peers!" exclaimed Neubrun, an Hungarian noble, whose estates lay upon the borders of Styria.

"Aye, or grant him the combat?" said Von Arnheim.

"The latter cannot be," exclaimed the cardinal. "The peace of the holy church forbids that knights engaged in this warfare should turn their swords against each other."

"If the lives of good knights be of value, then should we not aim at the safety of this Walachian?" replied the baron, "than whom I will maintain with my sword there is not a better nor more loyal in his presence. Let him not then, most gracious sovereign," he continued, dropping on one knee before the king.—"I pray your majesty, let him not suffer this fearful ordeal!"

"It was his choice," said the earl coldly, interrupting the baron.

"Aye, I know it Cillia," exclaimed the latter, and turning quickly towards him, "I know, goaded on all sides, with his brain on fire, he did rashly and most foolishly offer himself to this trial—"

"Rashly, my lord baron," interrupted the cardinal, in a haughty tone "Foolishly, sayst thou? wilt thou maintain that there is aught unwise in trusting to the decree of heaven?"

"Ye that are churchmen may discuss this point," replied the old man, sharply. "I mention only that these trials are long disused and out of date, at least here in Hungary. In thy land, my lord cardinal, it may be that ye still enjoy the fruits of them."

The cheek of the legate blanched for a moment, but its color returned again, and he seemed about to reply to the baron. The king interposed however. "Carry this no further, my lords. Most noble cardinal, let the matter pass, and do thou, worthy baron, rein in thy tongue. We are here for grave counsel, and not to foster bickering and discontent among our chiefs.

It is enough methinks that these exist among the common soldiers. By my life, here is our trusty general. Well, noble Huniades, thou art come to speak a last word in behalf of thy follower?"

"Not I, your majesty," exclaimed the good knight, advancing and taking his place near to the king. "The youth's brain is turned by his long imprisonment, or he hath drunk potions."

"Sayst thou? Well, unfold the reasons from which thou hast drawn this wise conclusion?" said the king smiling.

"His brain is turned, I say! he offers himself freely to the ordeal."

"Does he this?" exclaimed the king. "He will act the part of a good subject, thou dost say, and yield himself to the will of the council."

"Offers himself freely to the ordeal?" re-echoed Von Arnheim. "Thou dost mean that he submits thereto, thinking in good sooth that there is small choice left to him."

"Not so, good baron," replied the Waivode, "but freely, as I said, ay sheerfully, and with good hope of the issue."

"Then is the youth mad," exclaimed the old baron; "nothing less than mad, by St. Stephen! I protest against his decision as that of one not in his sound mind."

"To me it seems far otherwise," said the cardinal, scarcely able to conceal his satisfaction at what he had heard. "Now is it that I find him for the first time sane, and possessed of his proper senses. He will bow then to the righteous sentence of his superiors?"

"As I have said, my lord cardinal," answered Huniades. "And the most singular part of it is this, may it please your majesty. It was but last night that he appeared given up to despair—yet he was firm enough—and his only hope rested in the favor of his king. To-day, I find him changed. Confidence sits upon his brow and shines in his every motion. Nay, so secure seems he of his safety that he demands a boon of his sovereign. If, by heaven's grace, he come off unharmed from this ordeal, that without further meddling of priest, he may meet his accusers in the lists."

"This smacks of some sense yet," shouted Von Arnheim. "By heaven, might I but see it come to this! but it will not be, it will not be!"

"And how if we refuse this boon?" asked Ladislaus.

"He will then, I think, trust to the favor of the council, and avoid the ordeal if it be possible in any wise," replied Huniades.

"Be it so, as the knight asks," said Juliani. "If he come clear from the boiling water, and by God's grace, can wear steel glove and handle lance let him meet his accusers. Thou wilt not say nay to this, most noble Earl?"

"Not I, by this light!" answered Cillia.

"I will not flinch," said Larensky; "but will right gladly confront him."

"As for Di Rimini, we ourselves will answer for him," said the prelate.

"But how now, my lords? how now, most holy cardinal?" exclaimed the king with a smile upon his brow. "Whither now is vanished into air, thy

peace of the holy church, which awhile gone had such weight with thee. Is our war at an end? Is there peace made with the Infidel?"

"May it please your majesty," replied the cardinal, gravely, "when the accused shall once clear himself from this charge of treason, having come off unharmed from the ordeal, we may safely indulge his humor to tilt with these knights."

"Tilt, sayst thou?" exclaimed Huniades. "Dost thou call it tilting, with sharp swords and grinded lances; with each of these three courses, and three good strokes with the battle axe, for no less will content him. By mine honor, I look to see hacking of flesh and breaking of bone on the day when that meeting finds place."

"For all this, it may be allowed," said Juliani. "There is some matter of difference, I wot, between a knight accused of treason, and one cleared by the judgment of heaven from such a charge." Then after a slight pause, he added, smiling significantly, "I think no one need prepare himself for the combat."

"Why think you thus, my lord cardinal?" exclaimed the baron, turning quickly upon him. "Why dost thou venture so confidently to foretell the issue of this ordeal?"

"I hold him for a false traitor, Von Arnheim," was the reply, "and the boiling water is not wont to deal gently with such."

"But hold, my lords," exclaimed the Waivode, "my message is not yet told. If it should so chance that this combat take place, and if there be any good lance, of whatever kind and degree, who will do battle on the part of the accused, seeing that there are three combatants against one, the Walachian demands that each and every such knight or squire, may appear in the lists, unannounced by herald, and depart, if he so choose, unquestioned, and if wounded, or injured otherwise, that he may be borne off the field unknown. This being granted, the accused commits himself to God's mercy, and will abide the trial."

"By St. Mary, these are shrewd conditions!" exclaimed the king. "Why asks he this?"

"It is well known to your majesty, that he stands not in great favor with many of high rank—this, of itself, might deter some from appearing openly in his behalf."

"But who is there that would espouse his quarrel?" asked the king.

"Oh, fear not, your majesty, there is many a good lance among his Walachian horsemen," replied Huniades.

"He may count upon my aid!" exclaimed the baron; "but not unknown By St. Stephen, I will ride into the lists with vizor lifted, nay, unhelmeted, that all the world may see who it is who shuns not to peril limb and life for him."

"I myself also may take the humor to buckle on armor in his cause," said the Waivode, carelessly. "How say'st thou, Cillia, if I should appear, and we two meet again? We have fought in jest and earnest ere this methinks

a good blow or two would season this dull life, and make us young again."

"My glove upon it, Huniades," exclaimed the Earl.

"Nay, my lords, this cannot be," said Ladislaus. "Thou, Huniades, shalt not draw sword in this quarrel. Von Arnheim may appear if he will; but our chief! it were to peril the right arm of our expedition, to say nought of the goodly example it would set to our hot-brained knights."

"I thought as much," said the Waivode. "This general's truncheon will even push the lance quite out of my hand. I shall grow rusty, like an old sword hung up in honor of its past services, unless these Infidels may give me a rouse again."

"Fear not, good Huniades!" said the king, smiling. "Thou wilt ere long have enough to do. And now, my lords, let us break off, since this matter is thus happily ended. Let it be made known throughout the army, that the accused submits freely to the will of the council. Do thou see to it, Huniades, and if nothing less will serve to quiet them, he may show himself among his followers. Do ye, my lord cardinal and Cillia, see that all is in readiness for to-morrow—both for the combat and ordeal. It will help to allay these discontents. Let the lists be framed without the barriers on the southern side of the city, and let heralds and pursuivants get themselves in readiness. For ourselves, we will ride with Von Arnheim and Sonnenberg to look through the camp, that with our own eyes we may observe the mood of the men." With these words the young king hastened forth, mounted his steed, and accompanied by the lords whom he had named, with their equeries and attendants, spurred across the plain. Juliani and the Earl were the last to leave the tent. When they came into the open air, all had departed; no one was standing near but the sentinels, and they withdrew out of hearing, and paced slowly along the river.

"That last hindrance is now removed," said the legate, turning with a smile to his companion. "Thine enemy will no longer obstruct thy path. The fair Bertha may now lend an ear to thy suit."

"I have told thee that my thoughts are not busied with the girl. If he is mine enemy, it is for no such toy. Thou thyself belike hast an eye to the maiden, worthy cardinal, for, by heaven, I think it is not for the church's sake, neither for the welfare of this war, that thou art thus hostile to him."

"Thou hast a shrewd wit, Cillia, a judgment sharp and penetrating as thy sword's point; yet for all this thou canst not fathom my purposes."

"Let it pass then. Thou dost hate him heartily; this I see full well; for the cause thereof I care not. But art thou so sure that this knight may not escape us?"

"Aye," replied the other, "as sure as that this stream will not flow backward to its native mountains."

"My mind misgives me," said the Earl. "Such things have been!"

Juliani laughed scornfully, and answered. "Is yon Walachian cast in a different mould from other men? Is he framed of iron or of steel, that heat will not do its work upon him. But dost thou fear to meet him?"



"Not I, by this light!" said the Earl, "though I confess it would grieve me little if it went not to blows between us. If he comes not unscathed from the ordeal, then is he a convicted traitor; and whether the king hand him over to the headsman, or turn him out of the camp, a dishonored man and a felon, he will no more cross us in our purposes. But in the combat, the fault of a lance, the stumbling of a steed may turn it against the bravest."

"Thou needst have no fear, noble earl," replied the cardinal. "Set in order the lists as the king commands; but for thyself, thou needst neither grind spear nor burnish armor. Yonder knight is a doomed man, and will no more couch lance, or ride a course again."

"By St. Mary, I will arm myself, nevertheless, though thou dost speak thus confidently. I trust not to this juggling—this priestly craft. Ye keep aloof from danger; and still, by the turning of a finger, would give the advantage to whom ye will, like a certain Moses, bishop of Syria, of whom I have heard tell in monkish legends. He had but to stand, by my faith, upon a rising ground, at a goodly distance from the field, and lift his hands in the air, when straightway had the party which he favored, the best in the battle. And if, by any chance, his arms fell, from weariness, or because the holy father had forgotten himself, then the other side made head, and some lay brothers, forsooth, must be at hand to hold them aloft again. That was a churchman! but there are none now left of that stamp. I will not trust to it then, I tell thee; but will so prepare myself, that should this knight come unharmed from thy hands, he may find a rude welcome at mine."

"It matters not, follow thine own head," said Juliani, laughing. But yonder comes the monk Antonio. He brings us doubtless, grave tidings from the castle. Welcome, good father," he continued, addressing the monk as the latter rode up, mounted on an ambling palfrey, and accosted both with a humble reverence. "How fares it with all at the castle?"

"Well indeed, as to health of body, most holy cardinal," said Antonio. "the old baron's wounds are healed, all healed since I have been in the castle, the maiden suffers no bodily ailment, and in the menials I have noted nothing amiss; but there is much grief and vexation of heart with some of its inmates."

"Wherefore?"

"Even on the score of this Walachian, who, to-morrow, is to endure the ordeal of boiling water," replied the monk.

"Ha! and whom does it touch so nearly," exclaimed the cardinal. "Baron Moritz, it is well known, takes a deep interest in his welfare; but who beside good Antonio?"

"He is well esteemed by all—all in the castle esteem him," said the monk, with some hesitation. "The worthy baron says little of the matter, though I doubt not but he leans to the side of this knight, which is but reasonable, seeing that he saved his life in battle. But this—this is a different case—and concerns the heart of a young and tender maiden."

"Out upon thee, worthy Antonio!" exclaimed the cardinal, "what knowest thou of such follies?"

"Ah, have I not eyes, your eminence?" replied the monk. "Truly, what I have seen, that I know, believe me. Bertha, the daughter of our good host, is smitten with love for this same knight."

"What hast thou seen?" inquired Juliani, sharply. "How knowest thou this so certainly?"

"Chiefly because I have observed it of myself," said Antonio, "and partly because the maiden herself has avowed so much."

"By the mass, good Antonio, thou hast taken up a new calling, and art turned confessor of the loves of maidens, as well as of their sins. Of a truth, I have compassion for the damsel, if this be so; yet, after all, love is a fickle passion. There will be other ways to ensure her happiness."

"Father Antonio gazed in the face of the legate, as though at a loss to understand him. In a moment, however, his eye fell to the ground, his countenance assumed a downcast and rueful expression, and he replied: "Thou dost mean—yes, truly, she might take the veil; she might retire to a convent and devote herself to heaven, thus making sure of her eternal happiness. But I fear her eyes are not yet opened to the delights of such a life; she is still somewhat in darkness; she is not yet enlightened to that degree."

"Nay, thou dost mistake me, monk," said the cardinal. "What is this knight to her before all others? Can she not find a worthier, nobler lover, than this same nameless, landless Walachian?"

"Aye, doubtless; but maidens have their caprices, their humors on this point—so have I always found it—neither does this damsel differ from the rest. She seems heart and soul bound up in the welfare of this knight, and no other."

"Alas, for her then!" said the legate. "There is no help—the ordeal must proceed."

"It must proceed," said Antonio, looking with great significance into the face of the cardinal—"well, be it so—but still—"

"Heaven may interpose in his behalf. Is this thy meaning, good Antonio?" said the cardinal, fixing a cold, calm gaze upon him.

The monk seemed confused; he rubbed his chin with his finger, and appeared at a loss for words wherewith to express himself. "This is in some part my meaning," he said; and then drawing nearer to the cardinal, he whispered—"Your eminence hath a secret!"

"Peace, fool!" exclaimed the legate in an under tone; but with a stern and threatening aspect. "Peace! or the convent of San Martin—" He did not conclude, for the monk was already out of hearing of his words, spoken as they were in a low voice. Ambling palfrey and rider had started from his side, as if moved by one mind. Juliani drew near to him, however, leaving the earl, who looked on in some wonder, at a little distance apart. "Nay, fear not, good Antonio," he said, addressing him more mildly. "Thou hast no cause for dread, so thou dost walk uprightly. But I like not this prying

into things beyond thy depth. Move on in thy wonted course faithfully and humbly and all will go well with thee. Remember, this is a holy secret, a mystery of great worth and efficacy, and not to be used negligently, or upon one unworthy. Save in a righteous cause, and with the blessing of the church, it would fail to display its power."

"Far be it from thy servant to judge of so weighty a matter," said the monk with profound humility. "I reflected only to myself—he is considered by all a good knight—is much beloved in the castle, and chiefly by the maiden—and so it came into my thoughts to remind my noble patron of this."

"Aye, thou didst mean well, I doubt not, good Antonio, said the legate—but thou art ever too distrustful. Did not I also know of these things? But confess, thou didst come upon this errand at the promptings of the maiden?"

"Nay, in truth, but sorely against her will," replied Antonio. "Two days have passed since I first spoke of interceding with your eminence in his behalf; but she would not listen to it. To-day, however, being the last day, and seeing her grief—for she wanders about the castle like a weeping Magdalen, I took the matter into my own hands, stole secretly away, mounted this palfrey, and rode hither, and now, having done mine errand, I will in all haste return. Nay, nay, I came not at her bidding, but rather against it—for she professed outright she would sooner look for aid from the incarnate fiend than from your most holy Eminence."

"Said the maiden this?" exclaimed Juliani, reddening with anger. "Thou see'st, good Antonio, this spirit of impiety; can heaven smile upon those who speak thus scoffingly of its servants?"

"Scarcely, I think, were it to be expected," said the monk.

"This knight, also, hath he not thwarted me in my purposes, braved me in the presence of the assembled council! Yet I will not regard this nor treasure it up against him—that is, I say, not for my own sake, but in so far only as the church hath suffered indignity in the person of its servant. I will think of the matter, good Antonio. I will ponder upon it, and if it may rightly be—I will ponder, good father."

"Thanks, thanks, noble cardinal! I would ask no more," exclaimed Antonio.

"And be thou silent, monk," continued Juliani, in a sterner voice, "silent as the grave. Look well to thy steps. Lean not to these false doctrines—these baits of the adversary—which are daily creeping into the church; but keep thyself pure and upright. Bear in mind, too, good father, that there are sins even more heinous than heresy."

"Now, that I did not think," said Antonio, in wonder, "sins more heinous than heresy, and this we punish with the faggot and the stake."

"It is even so. Contempt of rightful authority is a more grievous sin.—Contumacy in a humble servant of the church. Beware, then! These we punish not with flame and faggot—but remember the convent of San Martin! And now begone—tarry not to answer me."

"Now would I give the best butt of wine in my cellars, to know what strange secret has been spoken of between your eminence and yonder fat monk," said the earl; for at the last words of the cardinal, Antonio had put his beast to full speed, and was already at a good distance, making his way across the plain.

"Some trifle, my lord," replied the legate, "which it does not concern thee to know."

"Some trifle, say'st thou?" rejoined the earl, "methinks, the good father took it seriously enough."

"Some matters concerning vigil and penance," replied the other. "But let us now part, good Cillia, for I see by thy face that thou art possessed with the devil of inquisitiveness, and I will not be at the pains to exorcise thee. And, hearken! thou wast right. Get thee good armor, mount thy best steed, have sword and lance sharp for the lists to-morrow. Who can say but thou wilt need them?" With this, Juliani beckoned to an attendant, who brought his steed; he mounted, turned his course to the bridge, and crossed over into the city, while the earl slowly, and like one lost in deep thought, bent his steps toward his tent.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE ORDEAL.

THE day appointed for the ordeal rose bright and clear. The sun had not yet ascended midway in the heavens, when crowds of citizens mingled with knights and men-at-arms, began to throng toward the Church of the Ascension, to witness this grave and interesting solemnity. Many also bent their way toward the place of combat, a listed space, which had been enclosed and set in order, without the barriers on the southern side of the city. Detached portions of the army, and among these a chosen body of Walachian horsemen, were seen crossing the bridge, and riding in close array, towards the lists, while a few of the latter, and these for the most part their chiefs, were observed making their way with the multitude, which streamed toward the cathedral. In the very strength and current of the press had the good father Antonio thrown himself, resolved at every hazard to keep pace with those around him, and, if it were possible in any wise, to effect an entrance with the rest. And he pressed onward with a perseverance which, considering his corpulency, reflected no little credit upon his resolution, for, notwithstanding that he was subjected to many a serious concussion, was more than once raised from off his feet and compressed, as it seemed to him, most certainly within half his natural compass; yet he clung tenaciously to his purpose, set his teeth hard, held his breath, and thus was borne along with the throng until its progress

was checked by the broad steps of the cathedral. Farther than this it was impossible to advance, and settling down until he reached the ground, he wiped off the sweat, which rolled in torrents from his forehead and cheeks, and then turned to scan more closely those who were near him. He beheld himself surrounded by wild and uncouth forms, of every nation and degree, while discordant and unintelligible sounds, which he could liken to nothing but those of ancient Babel, smote upon his ear, which way soever he might turn it. The good father certainly felt uneasy and anxious at finding himself in so strange a neighborhood ; but there was now no remedy, his motions were no longer under his own control. He must stop, move backward or forward, this way or that, at the pleasure of the crowd ; he could not now retreat, and he thought it best at last to resign himself to his fate, without murmuring. Before him stood two gigantic Walachians, who were conversing in their barbarous language, which was made up of the Sclavonian dialect, with some admixture of Latin and Greek. Antonio listened for a while attentively, shook his head, and spoke to himself : " It is Latin which these ignorant dogs are palming upon each other, a bastard Latin," and then continued to listen as before.

" I fear it will be an ill day for him," said the taller of the two to his companion ; " and what Satan's counsel is it that leads him to this step ? We would have brought him clear off, if he had remained firm, for I swear by St Constantine, I would not see him wronged."

" Nor I ! nor any of us !" replied the other. " It were no desperate matter even yet. It were but mounting our steeds, hewing our way, some hundreds of us, into yon chapel, helping our leader to a horse, and we have him free, with the wide world before us, and him at our head."

" That were a stroke, indeed," replied the first speaker, laughing, " though a perilous one, methinks ; yet I would not shun it if there were need. But Huniades is most noble, he is surety for him, and will not shut his eyes and let him be oppressed."

" Aye, but he is no priest," rejoined the second, " and understands none of their craft. I believe the life of our knight is simply juggled away by that same cardinal, whom, as all say, he opposed so manfully in the council."

" Yet therein did he act no good part toward us," said the taller companion, " us, who live but in war, and thrive best when it rises to the wildest."

" Thou sayst truly," rejoined the other ; " but our word was passed for the truce ; and is the word of a soldier to be accounted nought ? But let us push onward, and get ourselves into the church. Who knows how much it might cheer him to see a comrade or two at his side ?"

" How do these heathen rage !" exclaimed Antonio, preparing to avail himself, however, of the violent, but as they proved, ineffectual efforts of the Walachians, to force their way onward, " and imagine a vain thing," he continued. " They cannot do it."

" Are not we also Christians ?" exclaimed the second speaker of the two, irritated by the ill success of their efforts to penetrate the dense mass which

surrounded them, "or only these Hungarians, Germans and Italians—answer me that? Must our chief be thus misused, his life conjured away by tricks, and we not near to see if the game be played out fairly? Are we dogs, and not soldiers? By St. Constantine, I would some one might answer me that question!"

"Calmly, calmly, comrade," said the other. "Huniades will take care of all. He has a head! Ha, ha! and can joust with the best—has something wild, too, like ourselves—can hew into the enemy, can scour the fields, and live in the woods just like one of us."

"Thou wast ever too cold. Let us get into the church, I say; and if harm comes to our chief, by this hand I will stab yon cardinal, were it at the altar."

"Peace, thou wild men of war!" exclaimed Father Antonio—for the latter speaker, with a gesture accompanying his words, had thrust his elbow into the rotund belly of the monk, with a violence which made him groan again—and, in this manner, his thought, which he intended should remain unexpressed, was forced involuntarily, as it were, into utterance.

"What says the priest?" cried the wild companion, turning quickly upon the good father.

"Thou sayst rightly; I am a priest, as ye may see and know by my garments," replied Antonio, expanding himself; for he had understood but that single word in the address of the Walachian. "Methinks ye might cherish more respect unto my person."

"What says the shaven-crown?" exclaimed the other. "Strike him over the face with thy dagger, and teach him to jostle a free soldier with that unwieldy carcase." And, indeed, from the movements of his companion, the latter seemed preparing to put his counsel into execution, but at this moment the note of a trumpet was heard echoing down the crowded street, which announced that the procession was at hand. Every thought but one was now banished, and all turned their eyes to catch the first glimpse of its approach.

In advance came the pursuivants and heralds, clearing a path through the multitude. Next, at a good distance, rode a body of Hungarian knights, armed at all points, reining in their mettled and chafing steeds to a slow and even pace. After these walked the king, goodly in person and with a buoyant air—at his side, the legate, stately and solemn, and with a mien even more grave than it was wont to be. The Earl of Cillia and some nobles of his kin followed next. Then came the accused, without armor, and bare-headed, at his right hand, Huniades his sponsor, and at his left Moritz Von Arnheim. A body of foreign knights, on foot, closed the train. There was that in the manner of the Walachian, as he passed along, which seemed to inspire every one who took an interest in his fate, with confidence. He stepped firmly—yes, loftily, and looked around him with a proud glance; and, wherever his eye fell, it did not waver—neither did he shun the face of any, were it friend or foe."

"That is he," said one of the wild comrades we have spoken of, as he passed the spot where they had taken their stand. "It is good to see him. He is the same old one—it warms my blood like a hot ride in the pursuit."

"Yes," said the other, "he has not felt it much. He is one who can harbor anywhere, and not pine away. Though I doubt our General has had an eye to his cheer, and helped away the time with him in yonder stone walls. But where is Cillia, he who so hates our chief?"

"He walked before him. Did you not note him with his eyes fixed upon the ground? But here rides the young Italian, Pandolfus—curse on the heathenish name—he who would fain break a lance with our leader."

"He seems a gay bird," said the other.

"Aye, they are all so, as I have heard say; and the French will match them. But that is not such a face as our knight wears. There go the last, and now in, in with the rest." The two Walachians closed up the rear, and, by dint of great strength, made their way with the train into the cathedral. Father Antonio, much as he seemed to abhor the wild companions before him, skillfully availed himself of their efforts, and entered with them.

The interior of the church presented a solemn and impressive spectacle.—Ladislaus had taken his place upon an elevated chair or kind of throne, at the left of the altar, and was surrounded by his principal nobles who were seated near him, but somewhat lower. Opposite to him sat the cardinal, in state and dignity of bearing falling no whit short of the king. Pandolfo di Rimini, and many other foreign warriors, were near him, but they remained standing. The body of the church was occupied by an iron crowd of knights, esquires, and chiefs of different grades, while around, perched in every niche, and upon each pediment of the pillars which supported the vast edifice, were the spectators of every kind and degree. Upon a broad and slightly-elevated platform, before the altar, there stood a large cauldron placed over a brazier of burning coals. A cord, at the end of which a small stone was fastened, hung suspended from the iron bar which supported the vessel, and passed to the depth of three palms into the water, with which it was nearly filled, and which now smoked and simmered, and now, when the fire beneath it was replenished, boiled lazily up around its brim. In front of this, in a space kept clear by the heralds, stood the accused, gazing upon the preparations before him with the utmost composure and confidence. There were some, indeed—those who watched the play of his features more closely—that read in them some degree of carelessness and indifference, nay, even of contempt, for the fearful trial which was in readiness for him.

After the officiating priest had recited mass, the legate arose from his seat, and, turning towards the knight, addressed him in these words: "Thou dost stand here, Sir Knight, in this sacred place, and before this solemn assembly, charged with treason and falsehood. Remember, also, thou art in the presence of heaven. I adjure thee, therefore, if thou art guilty, to confess thy treachery. Add not to thy crime by braving the judgment of God, and mocking the sanctity of his holy temple." When the cardinal had ended

the multitude which filled the cathedral seemed moved as by the breath of a mighty tempest, for the young knight was already by the cauldron, with his arm bared above the elbow, ready to essay the ordeal. He had listened to the words of Juliani with manifest impatience, and as he now stood, that calm and confident courage which hitherto shone in his features, had disappeared; its place was usurped by indignation and burning hatred. He turned his back upon the legate as if in scorn, reached his arm first toward the holy father who had recited mass, toward the king, the assembled multitude, and lastly, without moving from his place, toward the cardinal himself, that all might see that the limb was uncovered, undefended against the power of the boiling liquid. He then placed his hand upon the altar, and raising his eyes upward, said with a clear voice—

“I appeal to heaven. I am innocent of all falsehood or treason, whether in thought, word or action, and I submit myself to the judgment of God as prepared for me in this ordeal.” Having said this, he made the sign of the cross, and plunged his hand into the cauldron, in which the water now boiled visibly. Nor did he seem in haste to withdraw it. “As this arm,” he cried aloud, “comes forth unscathed from this water, so is my soul without spot or taint of treachery,” and then drew forth his hand, holding the stone in his grasp; he loosed it from the cord by which it was suspended, and placed it upon the altar.

For a moment a deep, breathless silence pervaded the multitude, and then loud acclamations burst from every mouth, and the cry, “He is innocent! it is the judgment of God!” echoed from the massive walls of the church, and reached the street, whence it was sent back by the expecting crowd without. The old baron was heard loud above the rest. “He is innocent! St. Mary be praised!” he cried. “And now give the good knight his armor and his steed, and let him essay the combat. By St. Stephen, the matter is not yet ended.” Neither was Father Antonio silent, but elevated his voice with the rest. He had made his way close to the altar, and when the ordeal was ended, with a face covered with smiles he sought the eye of the cardinal, and shouted with great emphasis, “Laus Deo—praise to God. It is a judgment from above!” A look from Juliani, however, checked his transport, and still, when the legate smoothed his brow again, he was perplexed, he thought he erred in reading reproof in the cardinal’s features, whereupon he took courage and shouted more loudly than before, “He is innocent! God be praised. It is a judgment from heaven, and heaven’s judgments are righteous judgments.” Another glance which he could not misinterpret, put the astonished monk to silence, and he shrunk back into the crowd, muttering, “His ways are not like the ways of other men—I have always said it, and I know it. He doeth good and hideth it from the world, nay, even from me, who am not of the world. His right hand wotteth not what his left hand doeth, and this is rare, even in the church.”

In the meanwhile, when the tumult had subsided, the accused, it was declared, had fulfilled every condition of the ordeal, and was pronounced inno-



cent. The ceremony of wrapping the arm with linen, and keeping it sealed for three days, had been remitted, at which the multitude again shouted vociferously. The young knight now advanced toward the king, and bending upon one knee before him, begged that he might be allowed the combat.

"Rise, Sir Knight! kneel not to us!" said Ladislaus, solemnly. "Thou hast been this day manifestly protected by heaven. Will not this content thee? Wilt thou, with the hand of God upon thee, buckle on armor, and wield lance against thy brethren, servants in one common cause with thyself?"

"May it please your majesty," replied the Walachian, "such are the conditions, if I may so term the grace which thou hast granted me. I have done my part—let not those who accuse me shrink from theirs."

"I cannot gainsay it," replied the king; "my word is passed. But reflect, the mark of heaven is upon thee, and doth it not savor somewhat of a sinful temper to rush thus from this temple of God to arms against thy brethren?"

"I know not, most gracious sovereign," replied the knight, "if the mark of heaven be thus plainly visible upon me, but if it be so, I see herein no cause why I should not vindicate my honor in arms against those who have followed me with bitter persecution."

"Be it so, then, since thou wilt not be advised," said Ladislaus. "Take order, Huniades," he continued, turning to that lord, "that the lists be open within the hour, and provide this good knight with horse and armor from my own stables and armory." Thus saying, he arose, descended from his seat, and advanced towards Juliani. But the cardinal sat like one in a dream. A scowl was upon his brow, and his eye was fixed as if he were in deep thought. He arose when he perceived that the king was waiting, approached him, gazed upon him unconsciously, and then both walked side by side down the long aisle in silence. "Never shall I forget this hour," said Ladislaus, who was the first to speak, when they had come into the open air, and were about to descend the broad steps of the cathedral. "My bosom is filled with awe; now, for the first time, do I feel aright my worthlessness and weakness."

"It was a solemn spectacle," replied the cardinal, smoothing his brow. "And herein will your majesty concede that I was right. When all the rest, even thou, thyself, most gracious king, leaned to the combat, I still held firm in my opinion. In what other manner could the innocence of the accused have been made so clearly manifest?"

"I have heard of such things," said the king, "in other lands and in other times, but never thought I, with mine own eyes, to witness so great a miracle. Feel you not, my lord cardinal, as if we had been in the immediate presence of the Deity? An emotion near akin to this has ere now filled my bosom, when I have been watching the coming tempest, when the clouds have gathered black in the heavens, and are hurrying across the veiled sky; but as yet there is no rain, nor whirlwind, no bolt has fallen, but we await in breathless awe what each instant may bring of these. Then have I felt that I was in the hands of a superior power, and have known my littleness. God grant to all

our undertakings a happy ending, as he has granted to this good knight to-day!" The cardinal was unable to reply, and they held their way together in silence along the streets of the city.

From the church, the multitude now thronged toward the lists, and before the hour had passed, every seat and station in the temporary staging, which overlooked the place of combat, was filled with spectators. Opposite the middle of the lists, where the combatants were likely to encounter each other, an elevated platform had been erected, covered with rich cloth, and surrounded with steps which ascended to it on all sides. This was reserved for the king, and those nobles immediately attendant on his person. As Ladislaus entered with a goodly retinue, all rose to welcome him, and he took his seat amid the acclamations of the multitude. Presently a trumpet was blown at the western extremity of the barriers, the entrance was thrown open, and the Walachian rode into the lists, armed from head to foot. He wore his vizor up, and guided his steed around the enclosure, greeting with voice and smile those whom he knew among the spectators. When he had completed the circuit of the lists, he wheeled his horse and remained stationary at the western extremity. Three trumpets were then heard at the opposite entrance, and the knights challenged spurred into the field. They also rode around the lists, and then ranged themselves opposite the Walachian. They were armed at all points, bore themselves well and knightlike in the saddle, and governed their steeds with the dexterity of practised warriors. The young Italian, especially, rode with great grace, and attracted the attention of all present by his gay and gallant mien. Silence having been obtained, the herald declared the name and cause of quarrel of the knight-challenger, in the following words: "Here stands the good knight, Francesco, lord of Slænz, ready to do battle with Ulric, Earl of Cillia, Pandolfo, Marquis Di Rimini and Larenski, baron of Ternoï, for foul and injurious words spoken against his honor, and may God defend the right!" The challenged parties, each, by a herald, avowed himself ready to meet the said knight for cause assigned, and to make good his words in arms. The parties had received their lances, and the earl had placed himself opposite the Walachian as the first combatant in order, when a trumpet note, followed by another, like an echo, was heard without the western barrier, and two knights in black armor rode at speed into the field, and ranged themselves in silence by the side of the challenger. Both were tall and strong of frame, and so nearly alike in form, that, cased as they were in steel of the same color and fashion, it had been difficult to distinguish them from each other, except for the striking difference in the manner in which they rode. The one sat like a pillar of iron, almost motionless upon his horse, and urged him steadily onward, scarce moving limb or muscle; while the other swayed himself lightly in his saddle, pressed the spur sharply in the flanks of the noble animal which bore him, governing him with the slightest touch of the rein, this way or that way, with singular skill, as he galloped into the space. Both wore their vizors lowered, and showed no crest nor armorial bearings upon their shields, and when the her-

alds approached to inquire their names, they motioned them away without reply. A deep, breathless silence, pervaded the assembled multitude, as the new comers received their lances from the heralds, and addressed themselves to the combat. The scene which had been transacted in the chapel, had disposed all minds to awe, and the sudden appearance of these unknown knights, their similarity of form and stature, together with their strange and yet different bearing, impressed all minds with anxiety and dread. Not less than the rest, were the king and Juliani moved at the apparition of the strangers. The latter started, and became pale when he first saw them; he calmed himself soon, however, and turned to scan the knights who were around them.

"Who may yonder combatants be?" exclaimed the king, turning to the cardinal.

"In good sooth, I know them not, your majesty," replied the legate; "some of his wild horsemen, I trow, who have taken heart of grace, and masked in knightly guise, have seized this chance of fighting with the arms of nobles."

"Never tell me, noble cardinal," said the king. "There is more in it than this. But look around and see who may be missing that would likely thrust himself into this quarrel. Yonder is Von Arnheim. Seest thou Neubrun and Seefeld?"

"They sit yonder upon the right."

"And Sonnenberg, seest thou him, good Juliani?" said Ladislaus.

"He, also, is present."

"They are no Walachians," said the king. "By the blessed light of heaven, they will match with yon ordeal. Heaven seems this day to have especial care of yon knight."

"Heaven or hell, I know not which," replied the cardinal, "but of a surety one of the two."

"How like an iron statue sits yonder knight upon his steed, and moves not a limb nor muscle," exclaimed the king. "He is no Walachian."

"Marks not your majesty how unskilfully he handles his lance, and misaid himself with his bridle hand to plant it in rest. He is no practised knight after all."

"But see you, now he has it firm, how he rides like a thunderbolt upon the baron, as if he spurred against a tower, and had good hope to overthrow it. By heaven, Larensky is down. The young Italian, too, has lost a stirrup in the encounter; only Cillia comes off with equal advantage—that was a brave course, lances fairly splintered! Who are these strangers that foil thus the best knights in our host? St. Stephen to speed! Look around once more, my lord cardinal, and see if there be none absent who might do such deeds."

"I miss no one," said Juliani. "I still think they are none other than Walachians—the knaves are said to be brave enough."

"Aye, they are brave, and skilful in their wild way, but know no whit of knightly exercises. Larensky will not ride another course. He is wounded, he cannot rise! see, they bear him out of the lists. I cannot fathom it; by heaven, my lord cardinal, I cannot fathom it."

And such as the king described it, had been the issue of the first encounter. When the unknown knights had received their lances from the heralds, the younger of the two, as it might be guessed he was, from the lightness and activity of his motions, placed himself opposite the Italian. The other, he who had attracted the attention of all present by the iron rigidity of his bearing, prepared to meet the encounter of the huge Larensky. Lances were placed in rest, the signal was given, and with their heads bowed almost to the saddle bow, the combatants spurred to the assault. They met nearly at the same instant with a shock which seemed to make the earth tremble beneath their horses' feet. The spear of the baron hit straight and true upon the shield of his antagonist, and splintered into fragments, but without moving him from his seat, or disturbing it in any apparent degree. The fortune of the strange knight was more complete. His lance's point struck Larenski between the bars of his helmet, and bore him to the ground with great violence. The victor having made a slight effort to withdraw the weapon, dropped it from his hand, and rode in the same stern manner to the upper end of the lists to renew the encounter, or to watch the fortune of his companions. But the baron did not move. When the heralds had removed his helmet, it was found that the spear of his antagonist had passed through the defences of his vizor, piercing his left cheek, and inflicting a fearful wound. He gave no signs of life, and was borne off the field.

In the first course the young Italian lost a stirrup, while his antagonist kept his seat, firmly, and both wheeled again to the extremity of the lists, and waited until the trumpet should sound for the second career. Neither the Walachian nor the Earl gained any advantage over his opponent, the lance of each striking fairly against the other's shield, was splintered to the handle, but neither was unhorsed nor disturbed in the saddle. The second and third courses were run with various, but for the most part equal fortune, neither of the parties losing a stirrup, or failing in the attain. The four remaining combatants dismounted, and giving their horses into the hands of the esquires, drew their swords and crossed blades with each other. For a few moments their movements were so rapid that the eye could not discover with what effect the blows were dealt which they showered upon each other. They were parried and returned quick as thought, and rang against iron harness, like smith's hammer upon anvil. It soon became evident, however, that Di Rimini was no fitting match for his antagonist at this new weapon. The stranger seemed to play with the steel as if it were a toy, striking now on this side, now on that, and encircling the head of his opponent with a succession of quick glancing blows, that left him no time to use his weapon for any purpose of offence. Though the young knight defended himself with great gallantry, yet in the third encounter he received a stroke upon his head that he could not parry, which beat in his casque, and felled him to the ground. He was able to rise, however, lifted his weapon as if to address himself again to the combat, but straightway staggered, fell backward into the arms of an esquire, and was borne off the plain. The stranger then vaulted upon his

horse, and rode to the upper end of the lists to watch with his companion the farther fortune of the fight. By this time the combat between the Earl and the Walachian had also ended. Many good blows had been exchanged, each blade was wet with blood, but on neither side had any serious wound been inflicted. Both seemed equally matched, and were well in breath, when the heralds interposed and declared that the trial with the swords could proceed no farther.

Each then withdrew to the opposite extremities of the lists and quaffed a cup of wine, while the esquires looked to the joints of their armor and laced it anew. In a few moments the signal was given, the combatants stepped forward, each bearing a heavy battle axe, and advanced with confident and goodly mien to the centre of the lists. Here they stood for a few moments face to face, their weapons uplifted, and their eyes glaring upon each other through the bars of their vizors, watching for some instant of advantage to begin the assault. An impartial eye among the spectators could scarcely have discovered any signs upon which to found an expectation as to the result of the combat. Both knights had hitherto borne themselves equally well, both were strong beyond the ordinary strength of men, and both were known to be well skilled in the use of the formidable weapon which they wielded. The earl was the heavier and more athletic of the two, while the Walachian appeared more active, and was in the prime of manhood.

While all present held their breath in anxious suspense, there was a gleaming of steel, and in an instant both weapons clashed together with a violence which threatened to shiver them in pieces. The first blow on either side was a feint ; to this followed stroke upon stroke, axe's edge ringing against shaft, against helmet and breast plate, splintering armor, and wetting their blades with blood. The first encounter drew loud applause from the spectators, for each knight had wielded his heavy weapon with great skill and strength. During the second assault a blow which the Walachian aimed at the crest of his antagonist fell short, but the point of his axe in descending cleft the gorget of the earl and a stream of blood followed, flowing out over his corslet down to the ground ; at the same instant the young knight endeavoured to ward off a blow from his opponent, which beat down his defence however, and descended upon his head with a violence which made him reel again. Each now sank his weapon to the ground, and retired a few paces backward to draw breath. After a short interval they advanced to the third and last encounter. Both were now heated, and thought less upon defence than assault. At the very outset the earl raising his weapon with both hands to their full height, discharged a fearful stroke, which he aimed at the crest of his antagonist. The Walachian was not able entirely to evade it, and it struck, glancing from his shoulder to the ground. The blow staggered him, but his own was dealt with a better aim. It descended with its full force upon the head of the earl, which had been brought somewhat beneath him by the impetuosity of his own attack, and felled him to the knees. He was about

to repeat the stroke when the heralds interposed, and declared the combat at an end.

"Not now for the last time do we meet," cried the earl, angrily, as they were separated.

"Thou wilt find me always ready," replied the Walachian, in a tone of bitter hostility. "Thou hast yet to account to me for a long life of falsehood." With these words he withdrew amid the acclamations of all present, to the upper extremity of the enclosure to rejoin his companions, but they were no longer to be found. They had watched the combat until its result was no longer doubtful, and then amid the tumult of applause which followed, left the lists together, rode in silence around the barriers, until they had gained the western side of the city, and held their course northward along the Danube.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE FAREWELL.

THE two unknown combatants pursued their way rapidly along the course of the river, and for a long time in perfect silence. When, however, the city lay at the distance of a league behind them, they slackened their speed, and the elder of the two turned and addressed his companion. He adverted to the ordeal, to the fortune of the field which they had just left, and extolled the worth and valor of the good knight whose cause they had espoused. But to all this the other answered sparingly, replied in monosyllables to his questions, and seemed desirous to avoid all close communication with him. The latter, however, did not permit himself to be discouraged. He praised the address of his companion in the combat, the goodness of his steed, his skill in horsemanship, all indeed, whether in himself or others, that a warrior loves so well to hear and to reply to, and he spoke with such judgment, such knowledge of arms and knightly training, and his voice, which seemed naturally harsh and hollow, became so mild and persuasive, that the other seemed moved in spite of himself from his purpose, laid aside his reserve, and replied more freely to his interrogatories.

"Thou didst wield thy sword with a practised arm," said the elder knight, "and thy lance also right skilfully, though not with that firm and steady grasp which most of our knights affect. Where wast thou trained in arms?"

"I have wielded lance for the most part here in Hungary, though the fortune of my life has been various," was the reply.

"In Hungary," said his companion, musing for a moment, and then added—"Hadst thou said Walachia or Servia, where they lean much to the manners of Eastern warfare, I could understand it. I would have sworn

when the herald first placed the lance in thy hand, that it had been familiar with the cast of the jerrid."

"So the course was successfully run, what matters it after what fashion?" rejoined the other abruptly.

"Truly said," replied the elder, "it matters not. Thou didst ride wise most skilfully, yet thou shouldst reflect that a steed has no wings, and cannot leap and bound like a deer, above all, beneath this load of iron which thou wearest."

"Thanks for thy counsel, sir knight," replied the other. "While I yet wear armor I will remember it, and spare my good steed."

"Thou wilt do well. Mend this fault, and that with the lance which but now I spoke of, and few will be able to cope with thee. See, thus should a good knight wield his spear. Place it once in rest, and then hold it with a grasp of iron that it may not swerve, but go straight and true to its aim, whether helm or shield."

"On this point thou mayst spare thy words, noble comrade," was the reply. "I think never to wield lance again."

"How!" exclaimed his companion, "wilt thou so early leave the noble trade of war?" Thou art young; thy voice, thy every motion declares it plainly—and thou hast so soon lost the ear for the ringing shock of arms, and the splintering lance! Wilt thou no more back thy steed? Dost thou no longer take delight in the good fame which a warrior may earn?"

"I have not yet lost all love of battle and brave deeds," replied the other, roused apparently by the words. "Could these limbs no longer bear me to the fray, yet would I listen afar off, and my ears would tingle at the sound I shall still press my steed with the spur and deal somewhat with arms—enough, I trow to keep me from growing stiff and rusty—but no more with lance and shield."

"I understand thee," replied his companion. "Thou wilt retire to thy castle, for thou art noble, doubtless, and consume the hours with coursing the stag or hunting the wild boar. This would be well indeed in peaceful times, but not now when a fierce and impious enemy threatens our land, our religion with destruction."

"I will entreat thy counsel when I have need thereof," replied the other coldly and haughtily. "Till then it will be useless trouble to advise me."

"Nay, I meant it not ill," said the elder. "I speak as I would to a son, were he as young and brave as thou art. But may I not look upon thy face? I would fain behold the features of one who has borne himself so bravely."

"It cannot be," said Ali Pacha, for the reader can no longer doubt who the younger combatant was. "It was not without good cause that I wore this mask in yonder lists. I shall not now remove it to pleasure thy prying curiosity, for thou canst scarcely have another motive."

"Oh, I have a motive, and trust me it is not idle curiosity," exclaimed the other. "The tones of thy voice, thy form, thy bearing, move me with a strange power. I ask it as a boon, sir knight; remove thy helmet."

"Thou thyself dost shun recognition," said the moslem. "Well, wilt thou give secret for secret?" The other shook his head, but did not answer. "By heaven, thine offer seems scarcely equal," exclaimed Ali Pacha. "Thou wouldst read my face, and be able, should we meet hereafter, to say this is the man, and still wouldst thyself remain unknown. It is too much to ask."

"At least, unglove thy hand, and let me clasp it," said his companion. The young Moslem drew his gauntlet from his bridle hand, and reached it to the elder knight. The latter looked upon it for a moment, and then exclaimed, "the other, the best, the right hand! nay, refuse me not!"

Ali Pacha complied, drew the glove from his right hand, and placed this also in the mailed grasp of his companion. "'Tis a strong hand," said the latter, gazing upon it, "and I doubt not has struck many a good blow; but who can say if it has yet been raised in the cause which should be dearest to thee, which should sit closest at thy heart!"

Ali started involuntarily as the other uttered these words, and exclaimed, "How sayest thou? Whence hast thou this thought? It has been raised in the holiest quarrel which champion ever espoused."

"Aye, against the enemies of thy faith," replied the other. "Yet there be fiends that walk upon the earth blacker than any Infidel of them all. But dost thou wear no ring," he continued, gazing again upon his hand; "no ornament, such as doth many a knight at thy years—the gift of a mistress or a relic of past times?"

"I have been taught to hold the custom in contempt," said the Moslem.

His companion paused for a moment, sighed heavily, and then said, "I would I might but look upon thy face. Nay, I will beseech, I will adjure thee!"

Ali waited not to listen, but struck the spur into his steed, and hurried onward at a speed which almost defied the efforts of his companion to keep pace with him, much more to continue his discourse. After riding thus for a good distance, they came to the crossing of two roads, when the elder, laying his hand upon the bridle of the Moslem's horse, detained him gently, and with an exclamation of entreaty, both paused.

"We here part then, noble comrade," said the elder, in tones that faltered with emotion. "A fleeting moment, the business of an hour, brought us together; we have ridden side by side in yonder lists; this over, we now separate, perhaps for ever. Yet, before we part let me urge my prayer once more upon thee. Show me thy face; the features of so brave a man will remain long in my memory and be dear to me. Nay, it may so chance that we shall meet again, and I would not we should meet as strangers. Show me thy face, that I may know thee, that I may greet thee then, and say, we fought together in the lists at Buda. Think! in the varied storms of life, this may be a cheering word to us."

"As I have said, if thou wilt return me equal confidence, it may be that I will listen to thy request."

"But what can it profit thee to look upon my features?" exclaimed the



other. "There can be no cause, no motive for thy wish. But ~~with me~~ it is not so. I tell thee, Sir Knight, it may matter much to us, much to thyself and me, that thou shouldst grant me what I ask."

"Thy words are of no avail," said Ali Pacha, "so long as thou dost sit there in thy mask of iron, and will make no motion to remove it."

"Stay, let me entreat, let me implore thee!" exclaimed the other, as he saw his companion about to urge his steed forward upon the road. And the old man seemed to hesitate, he placed his hand to his vizor, withdrew it again, then raised it once more as if in doubt what he should do. But the Osmanli did not give him time to form his resolution.

"Farewell!" he cried, as he struck the spurs into his horse's side. "Not even to see thy features would I disclose my own. If thou ridest with yonder host toward the east, thou shalt view them, if it please heaven, though not cased thus in steel, but naked, and in different guise. Yes," he continued, when he was out of hearing, "I were then another man. How do I long to cast off this weight of armor! It did please me once to wear it, for man is ever so; change, still change attracts him, and novelty has more charms than habit for a while. But custom soon resumes its rights. Old feelings, old faith, old friends, aye, and perhaps old love, though driven out by new, will return again with double power. Would that I were once more clothed in the caftan, riding under the sun, beneath the shadow of my turban, and with my cimeter at my side! But I have yet a task to accomplish."

After Ali Pacha had given the casket of Abdallah into the hands of the Walachian, he had believed that there was then nothing to detain him longer in Hungary. He had repaid the nobleness of his captor with service of equal value, and at an equal, yes, at a far greater hazard. He could now return to his home, with a bosom lightened of the weight of obligation which had oppressed it, and with feelings of that high and elevated character which always follow the performance of a noble deed, and which oftentimes form the best part of its reward. After a few hours spent in the castle of Von Arnheim, for his own repose and the refreshment of his steed, he had purposed to betake himself upon the road to Ederneh. On the following morning however, when he came into Bertha's presence to bid her farewell, he found himself pressed by her prayers and solicitations to remain, and take part with the Walachian in the combat. No refusal would content her, nay, so far was she carried by her anxiety for the safety of that knight, that she did not scruple to intimate that he was withheld by fear from yielding to her request. Her taunt sank deep into his soul. He did not believe that she thought as she had spoken, that her words were earnestly meant, but that she should use means so ungentle and unjust to stimulate him to further danger, him who had done so much, who had set life and fortune upon the chance, and perhaps had lost them, this was a return which he was not prepared to endure. He saw now how slight the interest which he held in her bosom, and how light a thing it was to her to peril his life, when the safety of her

lover was threatened. His first impulse on hearing the word "fear" escape her lips, was to leave her, to take horse, and turn his back forever upon a land where for him bloomed no love, no hope; where indeed he could not find even an equal return of friendly sympathy. Other thoughts, however, prevailed with him. Bertha's beauty, the charm of her presence had not lost all their power, and when he had reproached her with her unkindness and she had asked forgiveness for it, when she termed him the noble hearted Moslem, and raised her blue eyes wet with tears, beseechingly to his own and implored him to remain, then was his resistance at an end. He remembered too that he had pledged himself to await the issue of the ordeal, and he believed that if permitted to enter the lists unknown, the knowledge of his disguise would enable him to pass the more immediate vicinity of the camp without question or hindrance. For the result of the combat he had no fears, and the desire to encounter Di Rimini was not without its influence upon his determination. He promised the maiden therefore to delay his departure, to appear in the field on the part of her lover, and thus, as she herself had said, "complete his work of kindness, and set the seal upon his noble, generous service." And this he had done. There remained for him now but to bid farewell to Bertha, and then he would set his face toward Ederneh.

He rode into the court of the castle, dismounted, and having reached the bridle to an attendant, ascended to the hall where he was wont to find the maiden. As he entered, she leaped forward to welcome him. He had removed his helmet, and she saw by the expression of his features that he brought no evil tidings.

"He is safe!" she exclaimed. "I know it by that glance."

"All is well!" replied Ali Pacha. "Abdallah's gift did not fail of its power. He passed the ordeal uninjured."

"Heaven be praised for it!" said the maiden. "And the combat?"

"This also has gone as our best wishes would have it," was the reply. "Our opponents were discomfited."

"But tell me how it was?" said the maiden eagerly. "Thy encounter was with the Italian, I doubt not, for ye were already on terms of defiance."

"As thou sayest, lady, and I have chastised him for his discourtesy."

"And the Walachian?" said Bertha, while a blush crimsoned her features. "He coursed with the others, and came off with advantage?"

"He was successful," was the reply. "His opponent was sorely wounded; but he fought only with the Earl of Cillia."

"How! left he thee to deal with two of his enemies? This was not his wont."

"Ah! thou proud maiden!" exclaimed Ali Pacha. "Thou wouldst envy me this good fortune had two of those knights fallen by my hand. But it was not so. There was a third combatant in the field on our part."

"And who was he? who was this third?" asked the maiden.

"I know not who the good knight might be," replied the Moslem, "but he bore himself right manfully. His was the best fortune. At the first shock his antagonist came tumbling from his steed."

"The huge giant Larenski! And ye knew him not? 'tis most strange How has heaven smiled upon us, how filled the cup of our wishes even to overflowing!"

"Thus far, gentle lady, all has gone well," said Ali, in a sad and somewhat reproachful tone. "And I thank Allah that his goodness has vouchsafed this office to me—to bring safety and happiness to those who—to thee and him whom thou hast chosen for thy heart's treasure. And do thou pray for me that my journey homeward may be prosperous, and that I may be received there with joy and favor, such as were ever wont to welcome me. Here I bid thee farewell. Greet yonder knight for me, and thy father, the good man who gave me shelter when I had need."

"But go not yet," exclaimed the maiden. "Await their return and receive their thanks for the fairest service man ever rendered to man."

"It would please me well to look once more upon that knight," replied Ali Pacha, "to hold him in these arms ere I leave this land, for my heart warms to him as towards a brother. But when ye meet together, by Allah, that meeting I have not steadfastness to look upon!" Bertha gazed compassionately upon him, a tear shone in her eye, but she did not speak, and the young Moslem, continued,—“I did love thee, dear lady. Thy beauty rose upon my heart like the sun when the cold dew lies upon the flowers. Warmed by its flame, it opened and expanded, shook off the cares that weighed upon it, and for a while all smiled around me. And when that sun hath set, I shall long think of the bright, the beautiful day which it brought to me! Thou didst deceive me, or my credulous heart deceived itself, and for a time I dared to dream of the highest happiness which can bless a mortal. But all has passed! As I ride hence, my bosom will be filled with thoughts of thee, but as I draw near and nearer to Ederneh, thine image will grow fainter until I greet my home. Then will duty and firmness banish thee from this heart, though thou wilt visit me at times in dreams. Here is the scarf which thou didst hang about my neck on the day of that tourney, when I entered the lists unknown, and bore the prize from all competitors. Receive it again. I would have no enduring token from thee. Yet give me, if thou wilt, this ringlet in exchange for it, this one which hangs about thy brow. I will wear it on my bosom as I journey hence. Each evening I will scatter a portion thereof to the winds, and with this gift shall my love for thee also diminish as increasing distance separates us. When I reach the boundary which divides thy land from mine, I will turn and bless thee, cast the light tress into the air, and henceforth all my thoughts shall be centered in my home.”

"Take it," she said, weeping, as she severed the lock from her head, and reached it to him. "Take it, and do as thou wilt, but think friendly of me. If I have deceived thee, forgive—forgive me; but thou wast not a Christian—and him I had known already."

"Now, praised be Allah, that I hear this from thy lips!" exclaimed the young Moslem, joyfully. "But for this thou mightst have found me worthy

of thee. It was but accident, accident and fortune, that have robbed one of thee. Fare thee well, then!"

"Fare thee well, noble, generous Moslem! May the world smile upon thee, and heaven receive thee to its best rewards!"

"We are promised much," was the reply, "but till now I have never known the worth of that paradise which Allah has reserved for his children. Farewell! yet let me print this first, last kiss upon thy brow. Thou canst spare it to me, he will not find it here, nor should he deny me this sad, sweet parting." Saying this, he pressed his lips upon her forehead, clasped her hand between his own, uttered some words with an impassioned tone in his own language, and then hastened from her, passed quickly down the stairs into the court, swung himself lightly upon his steed, and in a moment was seen riding across the plain at a quick pace, in the direction towards Ederneh.

And he did as he had said. At evening, ere he sought a resting place, he drew the ringlet from his bosom, took a portion thereof, and cast it into the air. Thus did he each night, until it had dwindled to a thin and slender filament, with scarce a vestige of its former beauty.\* When he had gained the borders of his own land, he scattered the remnant to the winds, blessed her once more, and then spurred faster towards Ederneh, and as he came near and nearer, the star of his home arose upon him, and Leilah was in his dreams, and in his waking thoughts, and in his prayers.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### FOREBODINGS.

AFTER the combat Juliani retired to his tent, overcome with anger and disappointment. Everything had resulted contrary to his expectation and his wishes, and it required the utmost exertion of his self-control to conceal from the eyes of the king the storm of indignation which raged in his bosom. So much the more, however, did he yield to it when alone. "I have been foiled," he exclaimed, as he threw himself exhausted upon a couch. "Hell's curses blight yon idiot priest! He it is—it can be no other, who has thwarted me thus. Had yonder Walachian fallen, these fears would be at rest—aye, I will confess it, I fear that knight. He has braved me, too, and this fool must baulk my revenge. Oh, it is the curse of those who toil up the ascent to fortune by paths too steep and tortuous—for common souls, that they must need their instruments, their tools. These fail them oftentimes when they remain true to themselves. I am sick of the world. Knave or fool—scarcely are there but these from whom we can select our aids. I have chosen the

latter, have bound him to me by gratitude, by love and fear, and made him do unwittingly the work of the other. That he should fail me, nay, betray me at this need! But his punishment shall be fearful. Oh, for a worthy knave, faithful and trusty! Ha, ha!" he laughed bitterly, "he were then no true knave. Perhaps I have chosen wisely."

At this moment some one knocked gently at the door of the tent. Juliani composed himself, drew his robes about him, and bade him who stood without to enter. At this the door was slowly opened, and the monk Antonio made his appearance. To judge from the expression of his features, the mood of the worthy father was not well suited to the present temper of the cardinal. His face was all smiles, and it seemed as if he found it difficult to refrain from loud and open laughter. The stern, ill-omened silence with which the legate received him, somewhat damped his mirthfulness indeed, but still the smile did not leave his countenance as he said, "That now I term a business happily accomplished, holy father. I come, first to render thanks to thee for this blessing, and then will I return to the castle, and offer thanks to Heaven also."

"Thanks to me, Antonio!" said the cardinal, laboring to speak with calmness. "Explain thy meaning—thou dost speak in riddles."

"Your eminence doth think too meanly of his servant, or is pleased to jest with him," rejoined the simple man, scarcely restraining his merriment. "I know it is not fitting that a humble monk should understand all the counsel of his superiors; but the matter is so plain. I am not blind, I am not wanting in penetration."

"Nay, thou art lynxeyed, good Antonio," exclaimed the cardinal; "nothing escapes thee. It is thy fault that thou dost pry too closely into things with which thou hast no concern."

"But tempered with good discretion—"

"Trust not to thy discretion, monk," interrupted Juliani. "But go on—say what it is that thus moves thee to such mirthfulness?"

"Ha, ha! it goes near to make me laugh—me who know how the case stands. There are many now in the camp, who look upon yon knight as little less than a saint—one in whose behalf heaven has miraculously lent its aid."

"And is it not so?" asked the cardinal, fixing his eye sharply upon him. "How else dost thou explain the wonder of his deliverance?"

"To what degree does this thing dispose your eminence to mirth," said the monk, smiling in a familiar manner. "And still is it in some sort true. Heaven has, in truth, interposed in his behalf, by the hand of a servant of the Church."

"And what may that servant merit for this interference?" asked Juliani.

"Doubtless great praise," replied Antonio. "A Christian knight rescued—a good soldier saved for this holy warfare. Great praise, and honor, and glory."

"Thou dost think so?" said the cardinal, speaking in a stern voice, but

without yielding to the burning anger which agitated his bosom. "Listen now, and hear my thoughts of his desert. He shall endure bitter penance, he shall take his sleep upon the stony pavement of his cell, and be waked by stripes to a day that shall bring him no joy and no light; his meals shall be scanty; he shall pine to a skeleton, and curse each hour save the last, which shall release him from his wretchedness."

"Now do I know, most holy cardinal, that thou art jesting with me," said the monk, smiling indeed, but faintly and anxiously. "Before I only suspected it."

"Jest!" exclaimed the legate, as giving way to his anger, he grasped the monk by the throat, and shook him violently. "Thou wilt find it to be no jest for thee, thou fool! Thou hast crossed me in my path, thou hast thrust thine idiot hands between the culprit and his punishment, between me and my just vengeance!"

"Nay, hear me, most noble cardinal," said Antonio, when Juliani had relaxed his grasp. "My idiot hands! what can this mean? It is a mystery greater than all."

"Thou hast divulged a holy secret," rejoined the cardinal. "Thou hast interfered with an ordeal appointed by the wisdom of the council—and thou hast heard thy punishment."

"Nay, nay, I have not done this!" exclaimed Antonio. "I have divulged no secret. I have interfered with no ordeal, no trial, appointed by the wisdom of any council. I have not thrust my hands—my idiot hands—"

"If thou dost speak falsely, monk, for thy life long shalt thou rue it," exclaimed Juliani.

"I have not spoken falsely," said Antonio; "but it is thou, most holy cardinal, who dost please thyself with putting a jest upon thy servant."

"Jest! sayst thou again," cried the legate, tightening his grasp upon the throat of the astonished father. "I jest with thee! Thou hast been treacherous, thou hast played me false, and for this shall the convent of San Martin be thy portion—aye, thy portion in this world, and hell thy home in the next."

"Mercy, mercy!" exclaimed the monk, raising his hands in an attitude of supplication. "Do not push thine anger to this extremity. I am not treacherous. I have not breathed that secret. I held it but at thy will. I declare this by my hopes of mercy hereafter!"

"Swear it! swear it to me!" said Juliani.

"I swear it by the heaven above us, and by the earth beneath us. I will avouch it at the altar, with my hand upon the host, and call God and the virgin, and the saints and martyrs, and the angels Gabriel, Michael and Uriel, and all the goodly company to witness for me!" said Antonio, with great rapidity and earnestness.

"It is inexplicable," muttered the cardinal, after a short silence. "I cannot fathom it."

"Neither can I myself; neither can I understand it, most holy cardinal, except—but is it permitted thy servant to ask one question?"

"Speak."

"Be not angry with me—but is it not thou thyself, my noble patron, who hast procured the safety of this knight? It was rightly done, I doubt not, for he was worthy."

"Worthy!" replied the legate quickly. "He was a traitor, and for me, had met with a traitor's doom. I lifted not a finger to avert his fate."

The features of the good monk were expanded with wonder, his eyes opened to their full extent, and he exclaimed, "Then was that judgment a true and real judgment of Heaven. Ah, my lord cardinal, how near have we been to God! He was in the midst of us in the Church, and when I should have taken the shoes from my feet, I felt a shouting, and cried *Laus Deo*, but meant glory to man, to thee in truth, for none other, thought I, has done this work. Yes, it was a true sentence from above."

"Of this I am not altogether convinced," said the cardinal, fixing his eyes sharply upon the monk. "My mind misgives me. But reflect, good Antonio, hast thou at no time breathed this secret—in some rash moment, when the wine cup, perhaps, had been circling somewhat freely?"

"Never, even when I have been quite joyful, quite mirthful," was the reply.

"It is most strange!" said the cardinal, sinking into deep thought. "Thou mayst leave me, father Antonio," he resumed, after a short silence. "I would be alone. But beware! thou art given too much to pry into things that are beyond thy reach. Thou dost lean too much upon reason, which is but a frail reed, unable to support thee."

"I may have erred in this wise," replied the monk, in a humble tone. "It may require time thereto, but I will mend the fault."

"See to it, good Antonio," continued the cardinal. "Cherish thy faith. Move onward in the lowly path which Providence has assigned to thee, and let no doubts nor fears perplex thy mind. Question not the doctrines of our holy Church, nor scan too closely the acts of its servants, thy superiors in station. Heaven measures out to each a portion of wisdom equal to his lot. The evil that is in the world comes from this, that each strives to pass beyond his sphere. And when thou dost approach such subjects, look well to the spirit with which thou art animated. There are those who will teach thee that when thou wouldst examine a matter to see if it be true or false, good or evil, thou shouldst call reason to thine aid, and trust to her light; that pretéor which but bewilders and leads astray. This is not the way of the Christian, but rather the sure road to doubt and unbelief. Prepare thy mind by prayer and fasting; trample the phantom beneath thy feet, and in its stead set up devotion and firm faith; then thou mayest approach the hardest question and lay hold on truth. Follow this counsel and thou wilt do well. Yes; I fear me, father Antonio, thou hast too large a share of reason."

"Alas, I fear I have!" replied the monk. "But it shall not be so long. Thou wilt soon see that I have given good heed to thy precepts. Wait but a little, and thou wilt say—Yonder is Father Antonio, he has subdued his

natural man, and now abounds in faith, as formerly in empty reason. Farewell, most holy cardinal !”

“Take my blessing with thee, worthy Antonio.” A smile of contempt played upon the features of Juliani, while his eye lingered upon the door as it closed after the simple-minded monk. Yet his counsel was wiser than he thought it. Who is there that in the storm of life, has not been strengthened and shielded by his faith ? It is a priceless good. Nations have fought and bled for it, and some, even, of the most peaceful, have thought life not too dear a price wherewith to purchase it. It is a treasure, varied and inexhaustible. Each son of Adam, be his mind ever so oblique, can make of himself a garment with it, clothe his frail nature therewith as in impenetrable armor, and then laugh at the world and its abuse, scoff at the frown of fortune, aye, and take death by the hand as though he were a friend and welcome.

“Far different from this, however, was it with the cardinal. His mind was a sea of doubts. The result of the ordeal had impressed him with gloom. He felt uncertain and perplexed. He knew not if he should ascribe it to human or to heavenly agency. The past also, rose up before him, from the deep oblivion to which he had endeavored to consign it : forms, such as he had known in earlier life appeared around him. Fate seemed to descend upon him with its wings of night, and wave their dark shadow over his soul.

In the bustle of the camp, however, and the preparations for the march against the Infidels, which was now near at hand, he was able to shake off his fears and divert his mind from self-reflection. In these duties he found ample occupation, and distinguished himself beyond all others by his activity, his forethought and untiring zeal. All enmity with the accused, or those who favored him, seemed to be laid aside, and his whole being appeared wrapped up in the approaching campaign. But he no longer, as formerly, bestowed his favor and his confidence upon Father Antonio—it was strange, but so had Heaven ordered it—he took to his counsels that unknown monk who had been his guide into Hungary—him, the man whom he had injured and made his deadliest enemy. Day after day they were seen riding side by side upon the march, while at night the same tent gave shelter to them. And the eye of that pale, gaunt father seemed to smile and become lighted up with joy ; and many said that his companionship with the holy cardinal would give him back his peace and restore him to himself again ; for none doubted but some fearful secret preyed upon his soul. On the other hand, however, the good Antonio appeared to droop and pine away with grief. He saw himself supplanted in the favor of one whom he esteemed as little less than an angel ; he felt forsaken and disconsolate, refused to touch the wine-cup, or to taste of rich, delicious viands. He consoled himself in some part, however, with the belief that all this had happened by supernatural means, and was a great mystery.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

## MOUNT HEMUS.

It was on the third day after the ordeal that the mixed army of the crusaders began its march. All burned with impatience to meet their infidel foemen, and pressed forward with cheerfulness and alacrity, as if to certain conquest. But their force reached scarcely to twenty thousand men, and a Walachian chief who joined them with a few horsemen after they had crossed the Danube, laughed scornfully, and declared that in number they did not exceed the hunting retinue of the Turkish Sultan. The Despot of Servia, however, reinforced them at Widin with a considerable body of troops, and the celebrated George de Castriot, better known as Iscander Bey, (the Lord Alexander,) was expected to lend them the aid of his hardy Albanians. Of the two routes which led to Adrianople, they chose the longer and less mountainous one, thus skirting the chain of Mount Hemus, or the Balkan of the Turks, which separates Bulgaria from Thrace, and pursuing a comparatively level course to the banks of the Euxine. Their force was somewhat strengthened on their march by various bands of wild, irregular horsemen; but the aid which they looked for from Iscander Bey did not appear. Yet the ardor of the chiefs, as well as the impatience of the common soldiers, was in no degree lessened by this disappointment. They advanced rapidly, and with a confidence which seemed not wholly devoid of presumption. It is not necessary, however, to accompany them, step by step, throughout a long and wearisome march. It will be sufficient for the progress of this narration, if we bring them before the reader as they enter upon the plain of Varna, a small town, not far from the shores of the Black Sea.

It was near the middle of November, and the evening air blew fresh and chilly from the mountain, as the host was preparing to encamp for the night upon that plain. The vanguard had already set up their tents, and surrounded them with a movable fortification or entrenchment of waggons—the main body of the army was defiling upon the plain, and the rear advancing at a considerable interval toward the spot where they should take a short repose, ere proceeding southward along the sea. At the head of the latter body was the Despot of Servia. With him were many western knights—among others, Pandolfo di Rimini, as also the cardinal, and the unknown monk, who had been his close companion on the way. Juliani rode from out the ranks, and, followed by the monk, ascended a slight elevation of ground, to watch the soldiers as they passed, and took their respective stations upon the plain.

"It hath been a tedious march, this of to-day," said the former. "The men need rest. I myself would right gladly throw my limbs beneath a tent, and sleep away this weariness."

"Your eminence has ridden hard," was the reply. "Thou hast been

everywhere among the soldiers, in front and rear, cheering them in their fatiguing march."

"And thou hast ever kept near me, Sir Monk," replied Juliani. "Whithersoever I might ride, there wast thou at my side, partaking with me in the labors of the way. Yet thou dost show no sign of weariness."

"Heaven hath bestowed upon me a frame that can endure much toil," answered the other.

"By St. Peter, thou dost shame the best of us!" exclaimed the cardinal. "Yet it is not that this day's journey has been more laborious than those preceding it—nay, rather has it been lighter—but until now we have found somewhat to vary the monotony of the way—the reinforcements which have joined us, the news they bring us of the foe. This day has seen nothing of these. We draw near to the land of our enemies, and our thoughts, as they turn toward the future, become more grave and anxious, increasing rather than, as heretofore, lightening the labors of the body. To-morrow we wind around the mountain and enter the Turkish provinces."

"Thou hast no fears for the event?" said the monk.

"I know not why I should fear," replied the cardinal; "yet I would give many a rood of meadow land had Iscander Bey joined us with his Albanians. Now, this can scarce be looked for."

"But the flower of the Turkish troops are in Asia, fighting against the Pasha of Caramania, who has again rebelled against his master," rejoined the other.

"Aye, they were so," said the legate; "but Amurath is no sluggard, and rumor runs like the wind. Yet the galleys of the church and of Venice were to guard the Hellespont! Let them but do their part, and the lion may chafe in sight of his prey. The flames of Adrianople will shine across the sea. I would, however, that De Castriot were with us!"

"I see thou hast less confidence, my lord cardinal, than the rest of the chiefs," said the monk.

"They are in a mood to scale the heavens," replied Juliani. "Were there a Turkish army in the clouds, or a sign of one, a constellation so named, it should down. But for myself, I know not how it is, I have been troubled by an unwonted gloom. For days past, I have found myself unable to bear a cheerful bosom. I have had strange dreams, too, and the most singular part of it is this, that I should let them have weight with me, now, for the first time, like a timid maiden."

"What are those dreams like?" asked the other, fixing his eye upon him.

"Nay, I did not write them down, that I can rehearse them to thee," replied the cardinal. "But an image like yonder Walachian I often behold in them. I feel, in truth, good father, like one haunted by some secret enemy, and, if I err not, yonder knight is he."

"Thou need'st not fear him," replied the monk, "while I have an eye to watch over thee. I swear it, by my best hopes of heaven, and pledge my life for it, that while there is breath in this frame, yonder Walachian shall not come near thee to harm thee."

"Thanks! thanks! good father," replied the legate, grasping his hand. "I know thy faithfulness. I will banish my fears, trusting in thy watchfulness and care." The eye of the monk gleamed upon him as he spoke with the fire of wild, inextinguishable hatred, but when Juliani looked towards him, the expression was gone, and he said, coldly—

"The men move lightly onward, my lord cardinal."

"Aye, they are approaching now the goal of their exertions," answered Juliani. "Nature has made man so. She shows him an object, a good, and he presses forward eagerly to obtain it; and then she pictures a higher, a greater, which he likewise seeks. This is the round of life, and thus she compasses his happiness by rendering him busy and active."

"Thus is it, in truth," said the monk. "The aim is nothing, but the earnestness with which he pursues it. The more of strength and eagerness he puts forth in his exertions to obtain it, so he is guilty of no crime, in that measure is he the happier."

"Rightly said—so that he goes not over into crime," replied the legate with some emotion. "But man is the sport of fate. He reaches forth his hand, and thinks vainly that it is of himself; as he wills it, and sees not the secret spring that moves him. I think with some fathers of the church, who prove it indeed beyond question; that we can do nothing of ourselves, nor will, nor act otherwise than as is prescribed for us by the inevitable decree of Heaven. And herein are these Osmanlis much in the right, when they say of a man that his fate is written on his forehead."

"Still do they hold him to account for his deeds, and award him praise or blame, as he seems to deserve it," answered the other.

"Seems to deserve it!" exclaimed the cardinal. "In that word hast thou spoken the whole secret—aye, he seems to deserve it, as he seems to will. Such is the voice of reason."

"But hath not the heart also a voice?" asked the monk. "Is there not conscience?"

"Conscience is a bugbear," interrupted Juliani, "which frightens wise men as well as fools. But, if this in-born sense, this instinct which assures me of the freedom of my will, be a phantom, who will answer for it that conscience is not likewise one? And does not the latter owe its power to the former?"

"Thus would you confound the very principles of vice and virtue," rejoined his companion.

"No; there are such things," replied Juliani, "and I hold this inward voice—this conscience, as but a motive, joined with many others, to make us choose the good and reject the evil. It was not meant to sit in judgment upon past deeds, to be a sting, a scorpion in the bosom. And, as with the mind, so is it with the body. Pain sits at each avenue, each outlet of the senses, and, though slumbering, keeps its careful watch, lest any noxious element should harm us. Here its true office ends. What is beyond this must be distinguished from its intent, and attributed to some imperfection in

the universe, an imperfection, perhaps eternal, and dwelling in the very essence of all things."

"He would scarcely deserve praise who should divulge these tenets to the world," rejoined the monk.

"It were not well to do this," answered the cardinal. "The herd, the rabble, must be led blindly around in darkness. It is for us to pry into these mysteries, and draw thence consolation and relief."

"Were it another than thyself who did speak thus," said the monk, "I should believe some heavy offence oppressed his bosom. But thou, most holy cardinal, art not like other men. Thy life has been passed in the service of heaven, and in doing good deeds. Thou canst have no such guilt wherewith to charge thy soul."

"Alas! who can be sure of this?" answered Juliani, sighing heavily as he spoke. "Where lives the man who, at some moment, has not erred?"

"But I speak now of some dark crime," replied the monk, with a solemn voice; "one unconfessed and unrepented."

The cardinal turned his head, looked over the camp, watched the clouds as they passed along the heavens, but made no reply. "Is it so, then?" rejoined his companion. "Well, bethink thyself. We are marching upon the way to danger—to-morrow's sun may shine upon a field covered with our lifeless bodies. Were it not well, then to confess thy sins, and receive that absolution at my hands, which thou dost need?"

"Peace!" interrupted the cardinal, haughtily. "I am not yet so near my end as to think upon confession and the last sacraments. I care not for the past. If this hand hath borne heavily upon some, they sleep securely—they cannot rise to injure me. I will settle my accounts with heaven at some later hour." His gleaming eye, and wild, distorted features proclaimed the emotion with which the monk listened to these words. He raised his mace aloft in the air, with a convulsive motion, and it seemed about to descend upon the head of his enemy, when the glance of the cardinal fell upon him. His first impulse was to place his hand upon his sword. He did not unsheath it, however, but exclaimed: "In the name of heaven, monk, what fiend possesses thee?"

The latter did not answer, but pointed with his weapon in the direction of the narrow pass around the foot of Mount Hennis, which wound along the shore. Juliani turned, and looked thither. A body of Spanis, the van of the Turkish host, was issuing from the defile, and spurring at great speed along the banks of the Euxine.

"They meet us here then," he exclaimed. "To-morrow, aye, it may be, this night will look upon a bloody field. And thou art so eager for the fray! and dost think to wield thy mace against the Infidel?"

"I will do what I may," replied the monk, calmly. "Of this be sure, at least; I will be at thy side, in the wildest and bloodiest of the battle." With these words both gave the spur to their steeds, and rode rapidly down the hill, toward the encampment of the crusading army.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE BATTLE OF VARNA.

THE Lion had roused himself from his repose. Upon the news of the breach of the truce on the part of the Christians, Mahomet had tendered to his father the crown, and a deputation from the divan had implored the aid of the mighty Amurath to guide the State through the tempest which was ready to burst upon the land. Awakened from his retirement at Magnesia by the danger which threatened Adrianople, Morad collected in haste the forces of the East, and advanced to defend his European possessions. Headed once more by their old master, the soldiers looked upon themselves as already victorious, and insensible to fatigue and hardship, marched with a speed almost incredible, to the shores of the Euxine. History seems in doubt by what means the Sultan was enabled to cross the sea, whether by the treachery and venality of the Genoese, or through the weakness of the Greek Emperor, and brands each in turn with disgrace, since upon the one or the other of these two powers rests the infamy of affording a passage into Europe to the deadliest enemy of Christendom. "When the Ottoman landed upon the shores of Europe," says a Moslem writer, "all thanked God, and the breeze of victory breathed upon the standards of the faithful. The Sultan advanced, succored by the prophets of Islam, and his cimeter gleamed like a meteor with destruction to the enemies of the faith." On the third day after his arrival at Adrianople he took upon himself the command of the forces of the empire, and at the head of 60,000 men, set forward to arrest the progress of his enemies. He was already within a day's march of the plains of Varna, when rumor proclaimed the rapid approach of the Christian army. Leaving the Janissaries with the remainder of his infantry to follow under the command of the Vizier Khalil, he placed himself at the head of twenty thousand horse, and set forward to dispute the passage through the defile, between the foot of Mount Hemus and the Black Sea. Of these horsemen, ten thousand were Spahis, the flower of his cavalry, eight thousand were Silihdars, and in addition to these there were four squadrons of Muslemin or cavaliers, provided with military fiefs, the most ancient cavalry, and created by Orchan to guard the imperial standard. Riding at great speed, he came in sight of the enemy upon the plains of Varna, toward evening, on the eighth of the month Regeb, corresponding with the ninth of November. Having posted his horsemen advantageously, and prepared against a surprise by night, the Sultan consigned himself to sleep.

It was not yet light when he arose on the following day, and stepped from the slight tent which had sheltered him, to watch for the first beams of the morning, and observe the motions of his enemies. As the day began to appear, he retired again to his tent, to perform his ablutions and to repeat the prayers of day-break, which are "borne witness to by angels." When he

came forth again, he was arrayed in his robes of battle. From his shoulders hung a pelisse of white silk, fringed with the fur of the black fox, beneath which his cimeter might be seen suspended, studded with gold, and adorned with precious stones on hilt and scabbard. He wore a turban of snowy muslin, in the folds of which sparkled many an inestimable jewel, and two heron plumes drooped over his massive and commanding features, plumes from the herons of Candia, of perfect blackness. From this it might be known that the Grand Vizier was with the army, for the third was wanting, and was worn by the aged Khalil. The beard of the Sultan was white, and reached to his breast, but his eye was full of fire, and his every motion was firm and lofty; he spoke little, but that in a clear unhesitating tone. Upon his appearance he was met with the deepest reverence by the Agas of the imperial stirrup, who crowded around him to await his commands, but no one broke the silence until his master first addressed him. Having mounted his steed, and gazed for some time upon the adverse host, he turned to the equerry, who rode at his side, and said: "What see'st thou in the camp of the Giaours? Thine eyes, Malek, are younger than mine."

The officer to whom he spoke, looked long and carefully in the direction of the foe; then placing his hand upon his lips, and raising it to his forehead, replied: "Lord of the world, all seems still in the camp. The dogs sleep."

"They are stirring upon the left wing," said the Sultan, and turning his steed to the right, rode forward to scrutinize more closely the movement which had attracted his notice. "They are Transylvanians," he continued, when he had watched them for a moment, "and led, I doubt not, by Jancous Lain himself. If it be so, I wonder not they are awake thus early. Ride one of you to the Bey of Anatolia, and bid him draw out our right in order of battle. I would Allah might dispose their hearts to delay the strife yet for a few hours. Do thou," he said, turning to a Salak Baschi, "send a quick messenger back upon the road, and tell our old servant Khalil to speed, and advance the standard of the Janissaries. Say to him we have the Giaours in the snare. The right wing of the enemy," continued the Sultan, after gazing in this direction for a moment, is made up of Servians, methinks. Allah confound that doubly-died traitor, the Despot! Ali Pacha, were he here, and faithful, should lead his Spahis against his old enemy. Let one ride and send hither to me Kehaya Bey; he shall command against these Servians. But the centre of the host is drawing out from their entrenchment. These are Hungarians, and other Infidel knights, who have come from far to engage in this impious warfare. By the beard of Othman!" exclaimed the Sultan, "they will be upon us with in the hour. We ourselves will look to these hounds." Thus saying, he spurred onward along the line to arrange his troops, to encourage them by his words, and give various commands to the officers who at each moment rode up to know the will of their master. Whithersoever he came, his glance inspired confidence, and his presence alone seemed to insure the victory to the faithful. The quick eye of the Sultan, sharpened in many a field, had not deceived him. John Huniades

with his horsemen and a few German knights, led on the left wing of the Christians against Caraz, Bey of Anatolia; the Despot, aided by Juliani and his Italians, held post upon the right, opposite to Kehaya Bey, and the king commanded in the centre, surrounded by the flower of his chivalry. As the sun rose the crusading army formed in line of battle, and amid the flourish of trumpets, and the various war cries of the knights, advanced spear in rest against the Moslems. When within a few yards of their foemen, they urged their steeds into a quick gallop to give impetus to their shock. The Osmanli awaited the encounter without moving from the spot where they were stationed, leaving to their heavy armed opponents the toil of surmounting the ascent which separated the two armies. In the interval many a warrior leaped from his steed, fell prostrate upon the earth, repeated a short prayer, then mounted again, and prepared to meet the assault. The headlong speed of Huniades, brought the left wing of the Christians into the conflict some time before the rest of the army was engaged, and his irresistible valor, seconded by the bold conduct of his Transylvanians, swept all opposition before him. After a short and busy resistance, the Silihdars were borne along into flight, carrying with them their brave leader, the Bey of Anatolia. From the high ground upon which he stood, Morad saw their defeat, and his face darkened. He had no time, however, to watch them longer. The centre of the Christian host was already upon him.

Here the battle was disputed with the sharpest and most obstinate courage. Animated by the deeds, as well as the voice and presence of their Sultan, his faithful Spahis opposed to the encounter of the enemy the most desperate resistance. Cimeter met lance and axe, turban and helmet were mingled together, and for a long time it was fought on either side, as if fiends, and not mortal men, were contending for the victory. But the impetuous shock of the Hungarian chivalry, headed by their king in person, had borne back the lighter armed Spahis over a good space of ground, and they now contended more irregularly amid the tents of the Sultan and his officers. Again and again did Morad encourage his warriors to the charge, venturing his life equally with the meanest of his followers; it seemed in vain, he could gain no foot in advance, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of his valor. It was after an onset like this, that an officer rode to his side, and said, that upon the left wing, Kehaya Bey was sore pressed by the Despot of Servia, and desired succor. "Tell him," said Morad, sternly, "to look for succor to Allah, and his own cimeter. I can send him none. Tell him to fight as he fought at Janta, and if needs be, leave his body on the field." As the Sultan turned, his eye was wet with a tear. "Oh Allah," he exclaimed, "how inscrutable are thy ways! Shall it be that these perjured Giaours win the day, and the true believers perish?" Saying this, he grasped his cimeter again, and surrounded by his Agas, threw himself into the thickest of the battle. But he was met by the iron spears of the crusaders, and fighting desperately, his cimeter broken in his hand, many of his best chiefs borne to the ground before his eyes, he was pressed backward again by the foe. Th

Earl of Cillia, who was foremost among the Christians, had already struck down the Mir-alem, or standard-bearer, and laid his grasp upon the imperial banner. Routed on the right wing, the left put in confusion, and unable to repel the enemy where he himself commanded, Morad, for a moment, despaired of the day. He had already drawn bridle to make his way out of the press, when a hand seized his rein and turned his horse again toward the foe: a voice also he heard, saying:

"Return not, oh, mighty Sultan! The battle is not yet lost."

"Unloose thy hold, slave," cried the Sultan, raising his javelin.

"Stay thy hand, most gracious master!" said the other. "It is no enemy. I am Michal Ali." Morad looked upon him more closely. A turban was upon his head, but disordered and awry, as if it had been wound about his brow in haste, or disturbed by the violence of battle; for the rest he was clothed in armor. "Behold thy Janissaries, oh, Sultan!" cried the young Moslem, and in place of his own banner, Morad saw floating over him the standard Imam Azam of that formidable infantry.

"Allah knows his own time," exclaimed the monarch, raising his hands to heaven, and then added to the Bey of Roumelia: "There is a stain, Michal Ali, upon thine honor; but see to it that thou dost this day wash it pure and bright, as of old. Throw off that accursed harness."

"There is no time, my lord," said the Moslem, at the same moment drawing the steel glove from his hand, and rolling up the sleeve of his tunic, he waved his cimeter aloft with bared arm, and then spurred his steed into the throng.

The phalanx of Janissaries stayed the current of the battle. Pausing behind the first rank, the Sultan took from his bosom a copy of the treaty which the Christians had sworn upon their scriptures to observe, and having placed it upon the lance of a Janissary who held it aloft, he exclaimed in a voice, heard loud above the tumult: "Let the Giaours advance against their God and sacraments, and if the belief of these things be certain, let them, oh, just Allah, declare themselves their own avengers, and the punishers of their own ignominy." In answer was heard the voice of Ladislaus, defying the Sultan to single combat. Morad urged his horse to the front, and the young king sprang to meet him. Before they encountered, the Sultan threw his javelin. It pierced the horse of Ladislaus, and the monarch fell, armed at all points, amid a crowd of foemen. The next moment his head was displayed aloft upon the spear of a Turkish soldier, who cried: "Hungarians, behold the head of your king!" Now, for the first, did the courage of the Christians waver; they yielded, and were forced backward. Still, however, many fought desperately, and every foot of ground was died with the blood of their impetuous foemen. Neubrun, Seefeld, the old baron Von Arnheim, and other names, did what bravery could do to restore the fortune of the field. The Earl of Cillia was conspicuous before all for his unshaken valor. He was without his gorget, for the wound from the battle-axe of the Walachian had not suffered him to wear it. But though exposed thus, at a point by no



means difficult of reach to the stroke of a cimeter, he bore himself as if invulnerable. Twice he crossed blades with Ali Pacha, once with Morad himself; but as often they were separated by the press and current of the strife which raged around them.

"Ali Pacha," said the sultan, as he found himself by the side of that chief, "thou hast this day by the providence of Allah, done good service to Islam. Get thee now to the left wing and succor Kehaya Bey. Take with thee a chosen body of Janissaries, and if there be others that have come upon the field, lead them into the battle. If that chief be no longer living, do thou thyself assume the command."

"Alas, my lord, the soldiers will not obey me," answered Michal Ali. "Scarcely would the few follow me that I led hither. The Aga of the Janissaries himself calls me traitor."

"That stain thou hast this day wiped away," replied the monarch, and thus saying, he took one of the plumes which he wore in his own turban, placed it upon the head of the young Moslem, and then added, "Old Khalil will wonder to see an equal in the field; scarcely will any, save himself, refuse obedience to thee so long as thou dost bear this feather in thy turban. And throw a caftan over thine armor. Thou wilt find one in my tent. Take one of sable as a Pacha of thy rank should wear, yet if thy hand should light first upon one adorned with the fur of the black fox, like this of mine, scruple not, but take and wear it."

Ali Pacha bowed his head to his stirrup, kissed the border of the sultan's garment, and then spurring his steed, proceeded with a full heart upon his way.

Upon the right wing of the crusading army, the battle had thus far gone for the Christians. The Despot of Servia did his duty gallantly both as a chief and a soldier. His followers, for the most part cavalry, reared amid the mountains, and trained by an almost ceaseless warfare with their Ottoman neighbors, were well fitted to contend with the enemies to whom they were now opposed. They encountered them with a bitterness, fostered by long hatred, and a bravery which had been often exercised against the same foemen. After a desperate charge, met with equal fearlessness and animosity, the Moslems gave way and were borne backward up the hill. Thrice, however, did the brave Kehaya Bey lead them back to renew the strife, and as often did the Christians repulse them. But the success of the crusaders on this point was not owing to the efforts of the Servian cavalry alone. There were on this wing many foreign knights, chiefly Italians, who fought with great courage, and wherever they levelled lance, made a deadly breach in the ranks of the Moslems. Among the number Pandolfo di Rimini did his devoir bravely, and though wounded in the thigh by a jerrid, did not desist from the fight. But of these the most worthy to be remarked were a tall warrior, something between knight and churchman, and a gaunt figure in the garments of a monk, of the order of St. Francis, who rode at his side. The former was protected by a coat of fine mail, which glanced from beneath his priest's robe, by vantbrace, cuirass, and gauntlet, while upon his head he

wore a scarlet cap, trimmed with the costliest furs. A triangular shield was suspended by a chain before his breast, and he bore a cross-handled sword, red with blood. The other was without armor, yet had he been cased in triple steel, he could not have exposed his breast more carelessly to the cimeters of the enemy. His weapon was a mace of arms which he wielded in his left hand, and wherever it fell, horse and rider went down, as before the arm of a giant. Goodly service to Christendom had that old monk performed on this day if he had put forth his whole strength against the enemy. But his chief care seemed for the safety of the priestly warrior at his side. Whithersoever the latter turned his horse, the monk was near him, bearing the brunt of the fray, and warding off every blow that was aimed at his person. More than once it is true he spurred his steed into the press, like one hurried away by an enthusiasm foreign to his sacred office, and wielded his weapon aloft, striking down a Moslem at each blow, but then as though he had forgotten himself, he would pause, and scarce heeding the foemen who pressed upon him, turn and resume his place by the side of his companion.

"That was gallantly done," said Juliani to the monk, when the latter had returned from such an onslaught, never thought I to see thy mace strike so many good blows for us. I warrant me this is not the first time thou hast wielded it."

"I have fought against the Moors in Spain," said the latter calmly.

"But thou dost care too much for our safety," cried the cardinal, as they pressed forward. I think, in truth, I had this day been fairly sped by the cimeters of these hounds, had it not been for thee. This is not well. In a melee like this all lives are equal, knight or varlet, cardinal or monk, each must take the chance as he may. Onward then, I will follow thee, if I cannot lead the way."

"I obey my heart," was the answer.

"Thou art faithful, monk," said Juliani. "The life of a prelate of the church is of great worth in thine eyes."

"Oh, aye," replied the other, while his eyes gleamed with light, and that fearful smile distorted his features, "and of such worth that I hold my own as of no value when thine is ended. Let me combat then as suits my will." He had scarcely time even for these words. The sword of the legate was already crossed by the cimeter of a Silihdar, who wrested it from his hand, and was about to cut him down, when his blade rang against the hammer of the monk, and was broken into fragments. The next moment the weapon descended upon his turban, and the Moslem fell dead, beaten from his horse to the earth.

The fortune of the battle seemed now to turn against the Christians. On receiving the message of the Sultan, Kehaya Bey collected together the choicest of his followers, and placing himself at their head, made a desperate effort to regain the day. The Servians were repulsed in their turn and driven down the hill. The Walachian knight had been posted with his horsemen

upon the left, and had taken part in that conflict, which as has been related resulted so disastrously for the Bey of Anatolia. When the Silihdars were in full flight, he desisted from the pursuit, and with a body of his followers rode to the centre. Seeing that the battle was going well on this point, he spurred on toward the right wing, and arrived thither at the moment when the Christians were driven back by the onset of the Moslem leader. Followed by his wild horsemen, he rode into the throng, and the combat became more equal. The thickest of the tumult raged around the cardinal and his strange companion. The cimster of a Moslem had disabled the steed of the former, and he fell, bearing his rider with him to the ground. But then it was that that monk put forth his strength. Raising his war cry, "D'Anguillara to the rescue!" and wielding his ponderous weapon as if it were a bulrush, he rushed like a thunderbolt against the foes that encompassed the prostrate Juliani. "Ha, St. James! Ha, St. Mary!" he cried, in a clear, inspiring tone, while he raised himself in his stirrups as he dealt each weighty blow. His single arm seemed for a moment to bear back the Turkish host, and there was soon a clear space around the fallen prelate. He then dismounted to aid him to rise, but seeing that his face was pale, and his corselet covered with blood, he grasped him by the shoulder, and raising his mace, exclaimed, "Art thou wounded? speak, sir cardinal, art thou slain?"

"Scarcely know I if I am hurt," said Juliani as he rose, and then added, in a trembling voice, "But who was that? whose cry was that? D'Anguillara to the rescue!"

"There be many good lances near us, but I listen not to their cries of battle," replied the other.

"Was not yonder knight who spurred by us, the Walachian?"

"It was he," was the reply.

"Father, thou knowest not how I fear that man," said the legate.

"Ha! ha! *him* dost thou fear!" shouted the monk, and then both were engaged again in the combat. The arrival of the young knight with his Walachians had given a fresh impulse to the exertions of the crusaders, and the Moslems were driven backward again up the ascent. Kehaya Bey was every where among his soldiers, rallied them again and again, and led them to the charge. It was in vain. The old warrior of many fields left his body on the plain as the sultan had commanded; his followers were driven into flight.

It was at this crisis that the Janissaries came up, headed by Ali Pacha. Mounted on a good steed, robed in the caftan of a Pacha, with the black plume of the sultan nodding in his turban, and his right arm bared to the elbow and bathed with blood, his very appearance seemed to carry terror with it, and whithersoever he rode the Christians gave way. At first his cimster was turned equally against the enemy and the flying Silihdars until order was restored, when his Janissaries advanced slowly and firmly, and after a short conflict, drove the crusaders for the last time down the ascent which had been the scene of so fierce a strife. It was the good fortune of the young

Moslem during this, to encounter with Di Rimini, whom he took prisoner. "Thou wilt scarcely this day regain thy plume," he said, scornfully to him, as he received his sword, and committed him to the keeping of a common soldier.

"In a field like this the best lance may lose," said the young knight, haughtily. "Were it in single combat—"

"Thy fortune was no better in the lists at Buda," cried Ali Pacha, as he rode on.

Notwithstanding the Christians were now retiring, there was still many a good knight who fought gallantly, and did not despair of victory. The young Walachian pushed forward eagerly, burning to contend hand to hand with the Moslem leader. The latter seemed to understand his meaning, and to be actuated by the same purpose. Both were tall, and as they glanced over the press, they seemed to beckon one to another, without hostility, nay, even friendly to the encounter. This did not escape the eye of the old monk. He gazed from one to the other with strange agitation. He forced his way to the side of the knight and said, "My son, thou wouldst measure thy strength with yonder leader of the Turks; but avoid him—touch him not."

"I do not fear him," was the reply.

"Touch him not," exclaimed the old man solemnly, "lest thou draw down upon thee the curse of heaven!"

"The curse of Heaven, and he a Moslem!" cried the young knight.

"I believe well he is near akin to thee; of thy blood and mine. I know not—but thou hadst a brother."

"Sayst thou so?" replied the Walachian. "St. Mary, I will not fight with him. And do thou father, draw bridle, and ride from the field. All is lost, I fear, but for myself I cannot yet turn my back upon the foe."

"Farewell!" cried the monk. "I follow the Cardinal Juliani." Saying this, he turned, and beheld the legate at a little distance fighting desperately amid a crowd of Janissaries. His son watched him for a moment as he spurred thitherward, saw him make his way through the throng, until he gained the side of the cardinal, dispersed the foemen with the blows of his mace, and then, ere they could renew the attack, both turned their steeds, and made their way out of the field. By this time Ali Pacha had forced a passage to the young Walachian, and challenged him to single combat. "I will not raise sword against thee," said the knight.

"Yield thee then!" cried the Moslem.

The young knight hesitated for a moment, but there was no choice. Cimeters and javelins were flashing around him, his followers had been borne backward, or had fallen beneath the spears of their enemies; none were near him but foes. "I yield me," he exclaimed, "rescue or no rescue," and at the same time reached his blade to the Moslem. As Ali Pacha was about to give him into the hands of one of the Janissaries for protection, ere he pushed forward, the Walachian said to him, "Let me follow with thee in the pursuit,

noble Moslem. There is one among the fugitives who is dear to me, and it may be near akin to thyself also."

The Moslem looked in surprise upon him, assented to his wish, and having spoken a few words in his own language earnestly to some of his followers, hurried onward against the flying enemy, leaving the knight to follow with what speed he might.

Their course lay at first with the current of the pursuit which rolled unimpeded against the Christians. As they advanced further they found the conflict not yet ended. Here the Walachian beheld his fellow knights singly, or in separate bands, doing desperate battle, hedged in on every side by their relentless foemen. Some he saw who had already surrendered themselves as prisoners. These stood sadly, their weapons drooping to the ground, or broken, their goodly armor stained and indented, and crest and plumage shorn and defaced by the fight. He did not stop to watch their fate, but pushed forward, exerting himself to the utmost to keep pace with the Turkish leader. They became separated, however, but still a few Janissaries remained near him, more, as it seemed to him, for the purpose of watching over his safety than of guarding him as a prisoner.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### VENGEANCE.

THE Christians now routed on all sides, were in full flight. When Huniades returned from the pursuit of the right wing of the Ottoman, he found the centre of his own army broken, the king killed, and the fierce janissaries pressing onward with a fury that was irresistible. After an ineffectual effort to rescue the body of Ladislaus, and to restore order among the Hungarians, he applied himself to save what he could from the wreck of the army. Retreating slowly, and showing an unbroken front to the enemy, he led off the greater part of his Transylvanian horsemen in good order, and gained the opposite bank of the Danube in safety. The rest of the host, however, was in complete confusion. The plain was covered with fugitives, flying singly or in small bodies, and behind them pressed the tumultuous Spahis, burning to avenge their repulse. Among the fugitives was the cardinal. He was alone. His steed, though fleet and powerful, was wearied with the exertions of the day, yet he still answered to the spur, and coursed along as if he knew the danger of his master. Juliani's flight, however, was not undisturbed. More than once he was obliged to stop and cross blades with his pursuers; and then, having freed himself from his foes, he would dash forward again upon his path. He rode thus for more than an hour, directing his course northwardly toward the river. He smiled as he heard his enemies one by one, desisting from the pursuit, yet a single horseman followed him with unabated obstinacy. He knew by the tramp of his horse's feet that i

was a single one, and it seemed as if he were gaining upon him. He spurred onward, however, winding his way craftily through wood and covert, and along narrow glens, scarcely turning his head to look at his pursuer, yet still he could hear that horseman upon his track. He pushed his steed to the utmost, cheered him with voice and rein, pressed him deeply with the spur, but the foeman came each moment nearer and nearer. His resolution was taken to fight. He drew his sword, turned, and beheld his companion, the Franciscan monk, riding furiously toward him. At sight of him, he smiled, sank his blade into his sheath, and exclaimed :

"Is it thou, Sir Monk? Thou art in good time. I can spur not a foot further. Get me into yon covert by the river. We may lie there concealed until we light upon some means to cross it."

The monk led the way in silence, and they soon found themselves amid a close copse, near to the steep brink of the river. Here both dismounted, and the cardinal sank upon the green turf breathless and exhausted. "Oh, the relief!" he exclaimed. "This is a good place, a fitting place!"

His companion showed no signs of weariness. He had borne the fatigues of the battle and of the flight with as little suffering as if his frame had been of iron. "Aye," he said, gazing upon the prostrate cardinal with that strange smile which he so often wore; "aye, this is a fitting place, a fitting place for thee to die."

"What sayst thou? to die!" cried the legate, starting. "It has not yet come to that pass with me. My wounds are slight," he continued, loosening his armor, and displaying one of some depth on his breast. "Call ye that a cut to part body and soul?"

"Thou wilt die here," replied the other sternly.

"Cease thine ill-omened croaking," said Juliani, with a trembling voice. "Yet, in truth, I feel faint—my wounds bleed apace. Get me water from yon stream. I have seen others die, and thought it of not much moment—aye, and have done some to death with this hand. But I—great God, has it come to this with me! Get me water, monk—get me water, I say."

Words cannot paint the fearful, hideous joy that shone in the features of the injured D'Anguillara, as he saw his enemy thus at his feet, wounded, fearing death, and borne down by remorse and despair. The sufferings of his life were now to be repaid, not in equal measure, but with all the fullness that one long envied hour of stored revenge could give to him. "This is thy last hour," he exclaimed, "thy last. Water will not soothe thee; no leech can aid thee. Therefore, bethink thyself of thy sins while there is time."

"Time!" echoed Juliani; "what time would suffice! I remember thou didst speak of this last night, before this game had been played out, which leaves me here helpless and bleeding. Now will it be idle."

"Nay, thou wilt have yet a good space," said the monk, stooping down, and staunching the wound upon his breast.

"Thy hand is skilful, monk," said the cardinal; "already I revive, methinks—I doubt it was but a swoon. Let it pass, then; my sins weigh not so heavily upon me."

"Do I not know," said D'Anguillara, in a solemn voice; "do I not know that this hour is thy last? Let it be gone by, and thy heart will no more beat again, nor the blood move in thy veins. Betake thee, then, to thy confession while thou mayest."

"Is it so, sayest thou?" answered Juliani. "Well, it were better, perhaps. Harken, then," and D'Anguillara bent his head to catch each word which the pallid lips of the legate whispered to him. But he seemed dissatisfied, impatient, and at last exclaimed:

"But these are of late years. Back! farther back, to the days of thy youth."

"I come to them," said the cardinal, faintly, and continued to breathe forth his words as before.

"Nay, deeper, deeper down into the past," exclaimed the count, after he had listened for a good space. "Come to the wars with the Duke of Milan, when the passions of thy youth were strong upon thee."

"Why dost thou point me to this time?" said Juliani, shuddering.

"Ha! does this touch thee?" exclaimed D'Anguillara, feeding on his agony. "But confess, confess! Be thy sins black as night, this were the hour to bring them to the day."

"The Conte d'Anguillara," commenced the legate—but the words failed him; his voice trembled, his bosom heaved heavily, as if this last sin were too big for utterance.

"Well, what of him? what of D'Anguillara?" cried the other.

"I betrayed him to his ruin—scattered his house—robbed him of his wife. He suffered the ordeal of boiling water, escaped from prison, and perished in the Tiber." These words he uttered quickly, and in a voice scarcely above a whisper. The old man waited for him to continue, but he added only, drawing the monk nearer to him by his robe. "The tale of my sins is complete, holy father. They are many; but thou, by virtue of thy priestly office, can absolve them."

"Absolve thee!" cried the other, and then drawing back his cowl from his face, he disclosed more completely his pale, haggard features, and added, "Dost thou not know me?"

Juliani gazed long upon him, shook his head, but did not answer.

"Is thy memory so weak, then? *I am D'Anguillara.*"

The legate started, looked upon him once again, and then cried, "It is false! He perished in the waters of the Tiber."

"But he has risen again to dog thee with his vengeance. Behold this arm! Thou shouldst know it, seared and scarred as it is by thy hellish malice. Yes," he added, exultingly, and his voice sounded in a clear and joyous note through the thicket. "I am the Conte d'Anguillara."

The unhappy cardinal had raised himself partly from the earth, and endeavored, for a moment to support the gaze of him who stood above him, but at this sound he sank back again upon the turf, as if stricken down by that single word. "The time has come at last," continued the other, in the same

tone. "Thy wounds, thank Heaven, are not mortal—thou wilt die by this hand. Oh God, I praise thee for this hour. I will praise thee for it henceforth forever, let my fate be what it may."

"Have mercy!" cried Juliani, in fearful agony. "I promise thee, I swear it, thy wealth shall be thine again; thy rank, thy honors, all shall be restored to thee. I swear it by him who died for us upon the cross."

"Canst thou restore to me the years of which thou hast robbed me? Canst thou restore to me my name and children? Canst thou give me back her whom thine accursed arts stole from me, and made a partaker of thy guilt and treachery?"

"By heaven! by the Virgin!" cried Juliani, "that guilt is not upon my soul."

"Wretch! wilt thou lie to me now?" exclaimed the Count.

"Oh, by my priestly word, it is true!" answered the other, eagerly. "She was an angel, pure as the light of heaven."

"She fled to thy dwelling, most holy cardinal," said D'Anguillara, with a fiend-like sneer. "How sorts this with her purity?"

"Listen, and let thy heart be moved to mercy," answered the cardinal. "It was for thee, to plead for thy safety, that she sought me. She thought me virtuous and holy, and I had long fostered in her mind the belief that my aid alone could avert the dangers which were then suspended over thy house. My duty to the church, and to the pontiff, as I told her, should of right place me among thine enemies, but my ardent friendship for herself—this I professed warmly to her—might make me falter; she should seek me in time of need, her voice, her prayers alone could prevail with me. She came. Trembling and weeping, she came to implore me in thy behalf. Then did I urge my suit—the price of thy safety." The cardinal paused for a moment, as if overcome by the recollection of that hour. "All my persuasions," he continued, "all arts and threats were in vain. I kept her in my palace, and left it to time and solitude to bend her to my will. Wearied out at last by her resistance, I betook myself to other means; but these, thank God, these, accident frustrated. Enough, she was innocent. No saint was ever holier or more pure than she."

As he listened, the bosom of D'Anguillara was moved by mingled emotions. Doubt, hope and joy were seen alternately in his features, and he could scarcely wait until Juliani had ended, when he exclaimed, "Wilt thou swear this? Wilt thou swear it, in this thy last hour, by all the hopes thou hast of happiness hereafter?"

"I swear it before God and his angels, in this hour which may be my last!" said the cardinal, solemnly. "As I speak truth or falsehood, so may heaven or hell be my eternal portion."

"She was innocent!" said the old man, while a smile shone about his mouth, and his eye was moistened with a tear, as looking before him, he seemed lost in thought, and forgetful of the presence of his enemy. "Adieu! thou art like one restored to me. I can breathe thy name once more."



with joy. I can look up to thee, and hope for thy sake, and for our sufferings, to find thee yonder, and be happy. By heaven, it almost makes me falter in my purpose. My enemy comes now to me not otherwise than as a messenger of peace. But where is she? whither fled she? Does she yet live? or where—where does she rest?" he asked, quickly, turning to the legate.

"In the convent of Santa Maria; sister Francesca—"

"It was she, then," exclaimed the old man. "Great God, how dost thou sway us! It was for this that I entered yon convent, when my hatred had grown weary and cold—it was for this—that I should see her, hear her voice once more, and be sent forth for our revenge."

"Have mercy!" cried the cardinal, as D'Anguillara turned threateningly toward him. "Thou hast been deeply injured, but have mercy! What will it profit thee to slay me? Have mercy! Crush not the worm at thy feet. Have mercy, mercy!"

"And so lose my life, cast away the only moment for which I have endured it," exclaimed the old man, raising his mace in the air.

"Nay, I will not perish tamely," said the cardinal, rising to his feet.

"Peace, thou wretch, thou fiend! dost thou resist me?" cried D'Anguillara, in a supernatural tone, without moving limb or muscle.

The unhappy priest seemed stiffened into lifelessness at the sound of his voice. He stood before him, motionless, uttered the word "absolution!" and awaited the stroke unresistingly.

"Thus I absolve thee!" exclaimed the old man, and the ponderous hammer fell heavily upon his forehead. Juliani breathed not a sound, his limbs sank together, his head dropping upon one shoulder, and then tottering a step backward, he fell from the steep bank into the Danube. D'Anguillara gazed upon him as he sank in the deep water, watched around for a while as though to see if he would reappear, and then fell like one lifeless upon the turf.

After a few moments, the tramping of horses echoed in the wood, and Ali Pacha, with the Walachian, rode to the spot. The latter leaped from his saddle and raised his father in his arms. He looked upon his face, which was of a death-like hue, glared fiercely around as if in search of another, and then said to the Moslem, "Come, kneel with me and embrace him. He is our father—mine, and, as I well believe, thine also." Ali dismounted, bent down over the old man, but seemed not to comprehend what was passing. At this moment D'Anguillara unclosed his eyes, gazed faintly from one to the other, smiled, and said, "My children! yes, I know that ye are my children. In thy face," he continued, turning to Ali, "in thy face I find the features of thy mother."

"My father!" exclaimed the young Moslem in wonder; "but how can this be?"

"Oh, yes, I am thy father," said the old man, "and thou art the younger of the two. Hast thou not a ring like this?" he continued, pointing to the one upon the finger of the Walachian, when the latter had removed his gauntlet.

"I have none such. Our law permits it not," replied the Moslem.

The brow of the old count darkened with disappointment. "It had my own face limned thereon," he said: "And still thou art my son, my Guido. See!" he continued, pressing back the surface of the ring, and displaying the image of his wife, "are not these thy features, thy brow, thy lip? That is thy mother, boy." Ali gazed attentively, and he could not deny that there was a strange resemblance between his face and that picture before him, but Francesco took him in his arms, and exclaimed, "Oh, it is he! it is my brother!" For some moments the three held each other in a long embrace, when the old man spoke, turning to the elder—

"Dost thou remember on that night when I did first disclose myself to thee; dost thou remember the words thou didst then utter? 'She is innocent! I would stake my soul's welfare upon it,' thou saidst. And those were true words—and this is a happy hour. He is there," he continued, pointing to the river; "she is innocent, and I die in the arms of my children." As he spoke, a sad smile played upon his features, such as they were not wont to wear, his face gradually parted with its wild and unearthly expression. His eye seemed to sink into the past, and he appeared to lose himself in the remembrance of his youth. "Adhelaide!" he said, after a short interval of silence, "are we not happy? dost thou not—" His voice failed him, and his vision began to grow dim and imperfect.

"Turn his face towards Mecca," said the young Moslem, "and confess, father, that 'God is one God, that He hath no partner in His glory, and that Mahomet is his prophet!'"

"Peace!" exclaimed the Walachian, "utter not now thy folly, now in this his last hour. Father," he continued, holding erect before the old man his cross-handled sword, "canst thou not see this blessed emblem of our salvation?" D'Anguillara looked upon it, muttered some words as if in prayer, then took the hand of the elder, and fastened his eyes upon the image of his long lost Adhelaide. He gazed long, when his sons felt his limbs relax in their arms; they bent over him quickly to catch a last, a farewell glance, but life had departed. Still, for some moments they held him in their embrace, and wetted his pale face with their tears; they then laid him on the turf, and fell into each other's arms, saying, "thou art my brother!"

"But he is gone who gave us to each other," said Francesco.

"I would," exclaimed Ali, shaking his head, sadly, "I would he had professed himself of our holy faith!"

"O, thou blind one!" was all the reply, as the elder again embraced him.

After they had given way for awhile to their emotions, mingled of joy and sorrow, Ali mounted his steed, sought out some of his soldiers, and the body of his father was conveyed to Varna. Yet, his ashes rest not beneath Moslem ground. By the side of her from whom he had been so long separated, he lies, in the convent of Santa Maria. They will meet again, and that will be a happy hour.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## CONCLUSION.

THE progress of our story must once more take the reader with us to Adrianople. The months had rolled away, and spring, with its friendly promise, made the earth glad again. The battle of Varna had broken the power of Hungary, and freed the empire of the Ottoman from a formidable enemy. A rich booty rewarded the victors, and many Christian prisoners were now captives in the city. Among these was Francesco d'Anguillara. The wounds of Ali Pacha had detained him many weeks at Varna. By the kind command of the sultan, he had been prohibited from following the war, and his impatience drove him toward his home. There, were all whom he loved, Leilah, the good Abdallah, and his newly found brother. As soon as he was able to sit on horseback, he mounted steed, and rode toward Ederneh. The fatigue of his journey, joined to the eager restlessness which agitated him, had caused his wounds to break open afresh, and he lay now in the house of his old friend, for in the day of his adversity, the face of the sultan had been turned from him, and of his rich possessions, horses, camels and slaves, not one remained to him except the faithful Zeinab. True it is, these losses were richly to be repaid. On the field of Varna he had earned a claim to the favor of his master, from which he would reap a goodly harvest, but the business of war had interfered, and the sultan had not yet thought upon the fortunes of his servant. But there was now no dwelling in Ederneh which was not opened to the brave Michal Ali Pacha. All welcomed him again, as in the time of his prosperity, and the portal of the Muredjim Baschi, Abdallah ben Sadi, was thronged daily after the hour of morning prayer, with the slaves of the rich men of the city, of the Pachas and Agas of the court, to learn news of the Bey's welfare, that they might bring it to their masters. As at the first time, let the reader enter with us the dwelling and the chamber of Abdallah.

He was seated, as then, upon a rich cushion, but his wise and friendly features wore a different aspect. A smile played upon his full lip, and as he sipped at ease the rich sherbet, which his slaves from time to time mingled and poured out for him, his eye wandered often to a small casket which lay near him, as if he purposed, after he were well refreshed, to examine and see what it might contain. Yet, there was no hurry, no impatience in his manner. He paused often between each draught, reclined back upon the cushions, and stroked his long white beard with a sigh of satisfaction, as if all were going well with him. When he had taken enough of the sherbet, he beckoned to the slaves who came forward, one with a basin of silver which he held beneath the hands and beard of the old man, while another poured thereupon water out of a pitcher which he bore, and upon the arms of a third was a richly worked napkin, which he reached to his master when he desired it. After

the slaves had retired, Abdallah took the casket in his hands, and said, while he raised the lid—

“By the beard of my grandfather, how strangely does all this rhyme together! The stars spoke truly then, if that be truth which yon Christian hath told me. He shall find kindred in Christian lands, but his fortune shall burn brightly in the east.” The old man then took from the casket various papers, a chain of gold richly wrought, upon the clasp of which was engraved a crest and armorial bearings; and at last a ring, the counterpart of the one worn by the young Walachian. He scrutinized it carefully, turned it on all sides, pressed it in various ways between his fingers, but to no purpose. He shook his head, and muttered, “There is a spring to it, doubtless—and a concealed one—so much is certain. Curse the craft of these Gîsours! I cannot find it. None but an Infidel could have contrived such a shrewd piece of hypocrisy. It wears a face like any other ring, but behind it—ah, ha! who knows! This day he shall see it. I have delayed lest at the sight thereof, his old fancy might return; nay, lest he might leave his home and the land of his faith forever, and thus rob us of his love, and Islam of his strong arm. Allah be praised, I do not fear it now! A tie that is daily gaining strength binds him to us here. How often, how tenderly, does he question me of Leilah! In his own person he repeats her history. Each day—I smile while I think of it—each day I find him by the fountain cooling therein his hands and brow. He sings, also, to her lute, and, if my memory fails not, the old songs which she so often sang. The time has at last come when he may see her. His wounds are healed. It is nothing but the fever of impatience which preys upon him, and this would soon leave him did he once come forth into the world. Yet still he hearkens to my counsel, keeps his chamber, and pleads like an imprisoned child for his liberty. I know not but I have been moved with a little malice. Surely, it pleases me to see him sit, as she once sat, sick, yet sick only with love. To-day it shall have an end.” The old man still busied himself for a while with viewing the contents of the casket; he replaced them at last, however, closed it, locked it in a cabinet which stood near, and then left his apartment to seek the chamber of Ali Pacha.

It was the same which Leilah had once occupied. When the young Moslem was borne thither, it was so as she had left it. Her lute, her books, her frame for embroidery were all there undisturbed. As the good Abdallah stood by the door for a moment, ere he entered, he shook his head, and smiled, nay, could hardly refrain from laughter, for he heard the sound of a lute, and the voice of Ali singing to its chords, and the song was well known to him, and now familiar to the reader. It was no other than,—

“Allah, who framed the stream,” &c.

When Abdallah entered, Ali had laid aside the instrument, and was seated by the fountain bathing his hands and waving them back and forth in its waters. The lattice was thrown open on the southern side of the chamber, affording a goodly view of Azim’s court and the gardens of Abdallah, but

through which the rays of an ardent April sun found their way with somewhat too much freedom.

"How dost thou fare to-day, Ali?" inquired the old man, advancing toward him.

"Nay, that I would ask of thee, good Abdallah," was the reply. "For days past I have declared to thee that I am well; my wounds are healed; yet still thou dost keep me here like a maimed hound, which cannot follow the chase."

"Thou dost think then that thou art free from all ailment?" asked Abdallah.

"I know not that," replied the young Moslem. "A strange fever hangs upon me, my brow is hot, and my breast labors with uneasiness."

"Fever! sayst thou?" exclaimed the old man. "Why then, in the prophet's name, dost thou keep open yonder lattice, with the sun's rays pouring in thus warmly? Cast open this one which looks northwardly. The fresh breeze from the mountains will cool thy brow perchance, and soothe this fever in thy veins."

"Nay, I will not have it so," replied Ali. "Whether it will soothe my fever I know not, but I care not for the view of the bustling city; that of thy gardens pleases me better."

"As thou wilt," said Abdallah, and then added, smiling significantly, "yet I think this is scarcely the way to remove the malady thou has described to me."

"Let it trouble me then," said Ali, impatiently; "let it trouble me, since thy skill can find me no other remedy."

"I said not that," replied the old man, in a quiet tone. "To walk a while in the shade of the garden might bring relief to thee."

"Oh, this would indeed be grateful!" exclaimed the young Moslem, rising quickly from his seat. "Let me go, father. By Allah, the thought of the cool fresh air beneath yon lime trees has already given me new life."

"Be not too hasty, my son," said Abdallah, drawing near to the lattice, while his eye wandered carefully through the long and winding walks of the garden below him. "There is time before thee. The sun is yet—I know not—when I see a certain shadow—"

Ali shook his head, then resumed his seat again, and replied—"Aye, within an hour, or to-morrow, or at the next new moon, perhaps! And Leilah too, I have not yet seen."

"Thou shalt see her, Ali," said the old man, still keeping his place by the lattice, and scarcely hearing the words of the other.

"And thou wilt intercede with her for me, that she give me back her love again?"

"Plead thine own cause with her," replied Abdallah, smiling. "And now, my son, pass down into the garden. The sun is—it is time. Thou needst not tarry to reply to me." The old man smiled, while his eye followed him as he left the apartment; he then turned and resumed his place near the window. He remained there for some moments in silence, pre-

sently left the lattice, and commenced to pace the chamber impatiently. His color changed often, he was uneasy and restless. He took at last the seat which Ali had left by the fountain, sighed heavily, while he sank back upon the cushions, as if he himself might be suffering from some malady, placed his hand negligently in the cool water, waved it back and forth, withdrew it, and was about to place it upon his brow, but he bethought himself, smiled, and rose from his position. At this moment a light step was heard, and Leilah rushed blushing into the chamber, and threw herself upon his bosom.

"Oh, my father!" she exclaimed, "I have seen him; he has spoken with me, he has asked me for my love, my hand!"

"And what answer didst thou give him?" asked Abdallah, kissing her brow.

"For my love!" she said, "he might easily see that it was his. I would not deny it, and have him charge me with falsehood. For my hand—I told him he should speak with thee, my father."

"And what shall I say to him?" inquired the old man smiling. "What shall I reply to him, Leilah? Shall I tell him that I remember his past offences?"

"I have forgiven him," said the maiden, casting down her eyes. "Why wanst not thou also, my good father?"

"This I can easily do," replied Abdallah, pressing her to his bosom. "I do from my heart forgive him, and it is a thing resolved and fixed,—thou art the wife of Ali Pacha."

At the sound of this word Leilah hid her face again, but raised it in a moment, with pleasure beaming in her eyes. "And I stand once more in my old chamber," she said. "Well, I have kept my word, for is not this a happy hour?"

On the following day, the brothers met again in the house of the good Abdallah. The old man was present at the interview, and was much moved at their joy. He was able, also, to add thereto, and gave them that ring which he held in his possession, and which both knew to be the one spoken of by their father. Francesco touched the spring, and they beheld the face of a young man, of noble and lofty aspect, and as they gazed long upon it with tears, they found therein again the features of their father, as he appeared to them in that hour when they lost him. Abdallah brought to them also the casket, and told them how it had fallen into his hands. "It was after an inroad into Servia," he said, "from which the soldiers of the Sultan had brought back many Christian captives, and Ali also among the number, that he had purchased it from a Janissary, into whose hands the young child had fallen." The contents thereof fully established the belief of their father, and left them no doubt of the near tie which bound them together. Among other things, was a paper, with a form of writing upon it, for the preparation of some secret mixture. Beneath it was written—'*Francesco d'Anguillara. Prove it, and fear not. C. O.*' When he had read this, Francesco recalled to mind the words of his father, and narrated to Abdallah and Ali his sad history, all, as he had told it to him. Abdallah also had his part to relate, for it was from

this paper, and no other source, that he had obtained that potent liquid which Leilah had placed in the hands of Ali. And all wondered at the inscrutable ways of Providence, and thanked God for the great goodness which he had shown toward them.

"It was for me that it was meant !" exclaimed the elder. "The letters stand, *Francesco d'Anguillara*. But little did that good friend think for whom he gave that secret, or by whom and through whom I should receive it. Oh, thou didst act nobly by me !" he continued, turning to his brother, "and then I was a stranger to thee."

"It was but an equal debt which I repaid," said Ali, clasping his hand, and then added : "But now, my brother, thou wilt remain with us in this land. The Sultan will take care of thy fortunes ; thou wilt embrace the faith of our prophet, and make thy home beneath the shadow of the house of Othman."

"God and our blessed Lady shall keep me from it," replied Francesco.—  
"But thou, Guido—"

"Nay, call me still Ali."

"But thou, Ali, wilt leave this land, and return to the home of our fathers. A rich inheritance awaits thee, and the religion of truth will welcome thee to its arms."

"It cannot be," answered the young Moslem. "I have been nurtured and brought up in the faith of Islam, I have shed my blood in its defence, and now to forsake it, would be to deny my best hopes, both here and hereafter. But for thee, tarry at least until thou hast listened to the teachings of our Imams, of our wise Mollahs : it may be that thine eyes will be opened, and thou wilt be guided into the way of truth."

"Speak no more of it," replied the elder, with deep emotion. "If thou wilt still cleave to the faith of yonder—to thine errors, I say, may God be thy help, though how I might hope this, I see not, since thou dost deny Him, through whom alone we can approach Him. *Agnus Dei, miserere nobis,*" added the young knight, raising his eyes to Heaven and signing himself with the cross.

"Alas, alas ! my brother !" exclaimed the younger, while a sad and compassionate smile played upon his features, "I shall not see thee, then, in that paradise which our prophet has promised to us."

As the old man listened, his eyes became filled with tears. "My children, he said, in a mild and friendly voice ; "my children, be at peace ! Seek not to alter what Heaven has irrevocably fixed. The decrees of Allah have cast you in different lands, bound you to different faiths ; and custom, with its invisible, yet iron ties, has wedded you to their usages and tenets. He who would forsake these, must first become false to his own heart. But if Allah has separated you in this world, who can say that he who is above all the prophets, may not unite you again, before his face forever ?" Then they smiled at these words, and fell into each other's arms.

It was a sad farewell when the brothers parted. But Francesco did not

leave Adrianople until he had seen her whom Ali had chosen to be his wife ; and, as Leilah unveiled her face before him, he confessed to himself that, except one, he had never beheld a maiden more beautiful. The rest will not detain us long, for it is not necessary to follow the elder into Hungary, and to relate particularly by what means he came into possession of the estates of Altenkreuz, and how he soon, thereupon, obtained the hand of Bertha ; and how he found himself repaid by this for all the suffering and danger he had undergone. Yet this may be added. He was enabled to effect the release of his true servant Johaun, or Giacomo, from the imprisonment into which he had been thrown by the Earl of Cillia. And his words made good those of Abdallah, for it was in Servia that he had lost the young Guido, whither he had fled to escape the violence of Ulric. Fortune seemed at last to smile upon the young Walachian. The power of his old enemy was diminished—for during the interreign which followed the death of Ladislaus, Huniades remained the sole bulwark of the land. At the head of a small force, he held the Infidels at bay during a long and dangerous war, and rescued the kingdom from the yoke of the Ottoman. His valor and skill were well rewarded. He kept the post of regent until his death, and was enabled to bequeath the crown of Hungary to his son Mathias Corvinus, a name well known in the history of that nation.

During the progress of the war, the brothers were never arrayed against each other in arms. It seemed as if Morad had regard to this, for he removed Ali Pacha from his army in Europe, and entrusted to him the conduct of his affairs in the East. Here he found an ample field for the display of his abilities, and in repressing the turbulent Pacha of Caramania, rendered good service to the empire. He continued to deserve and enjoy the favor of his master, until the angel of death summoned the Sultan from the throne.—Neither did Mahomet, when he resumed the sceptre, refuse him his confidence. He had grown older and wiser ; other favorites had banished the beauty of Leilah from his memory, and he no longer saw the rival of former years in the best servant of his crown.

The brothers met, however, at intervals of peace. The distance which separated them was then no bar to either, and alternately, castle Altenkreuz, and Ali's palace in Anatolia, were the scene of many a happy interview. At these times they had much to relate to each other. They would speak of their past lives, of the present, of the sad fate of those who gave them being, and cast often an inquiring glance into the future, to know what this had in store for them. But, in chief part, their discourse seemed to turn upon the various charms, and pleasing qualities of the partners in their happiness, and it was a dispute with them, whom heaven had favored in the highest degree. Many friendly contentions arose on this point, which, as they had no umpire who could decide it for them, remained undetermined to the last. After a few years, however, these turned upon other and newer subjects. Each could now speak with confident partiality of the fair promise of his children, how the boys began, even already, to handle lance and cimeter.



and the girls were certainly, Bertha and Leilah, renewed again. It was a great pleasure to Ali as he rode with his train into the court of castle Altenkreuz, to see the delight with which his nephews, the young Giaours, as he would call them, welcomed their pagan uncle, and admired his rich, foreign robes. It was a pleasure to him also to be with Bertha, to sit near her, and speak of past times, and praise the beauty of Leilah, her who now held possession of his heart. When he did this she would smile, and accuse him of great fickleness, to which charge it was long before he could find a reply. He found one at last, however, and as often as she spoke of his inconstancy, would answer :

"It was meant to be so. It was so decreed by Heaven, for our happiness, that I should love thee, and linger in Hungary. It was good also, that I was taken captive at Istatu ; yet I foolishly grieved at it and repined. But for this, how different might be our lot !"

Of their opposite creeds the brothers rarely spoke together. Once, indeed, they referred to them, and endeavored to prove to each other his blindness and error. The effort was fruitless.

"I will die as I have lived," said Ali, "a servant of the Sultan, and a follower of our blessed Prophet."

"And I," replied Francesco, "will cleave forever to the Holy Catholic Church." And when their faces darkened, and the tears came into their eyes, they remembered the words of the good Abdallah, and remained consoled.

THE END.









